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ABSTRACT

This journal is published twice a year with the aim of disseminating the work of the Linguistics Institute of Ireland and publishing articles on different aspects of applied linguistics and the learning and teaching of living languages. Articles and regular features in this issue include the following: "Institute Matters"; "Staff Activities"; "Some Aspects of the Current state of Foreign Language Education in the United States" (David Barnwell); "Teleservices Languages or Language: A Personal Perspective" (Edward Bressan); "Cursa Inseirbhise i mBeal Feirste don Ghaeloideachas" (Sean Mac Corraidh); "Language and Language Policies in the EU: Haphazard Views from Outside" (Alfred J. Majewicz); "From L2-L2/3: An Investigation of Learners Metalinguistic Awareness and Learner Strategies" (Muiris O Laoire, Mary Burke, Mary Haslam); "Proficiency of Irish Adults in European Languages" (Padraig O Riagain, Teresa Gorman); "Exploring the 'Other': Innovation and Research in Third Level Language Education" (Bill Richardson); "Information and Communication Technologies and the Teaching and Learning of French in Irish Second Level Schools" (Josephine Dolan, Frederic Royall); "Tandem Learning: Autonomy and Partnership in Second Language Acquisition" (Steve Walsh, Sylvie Campion); "New Books Received"; "Notices of Lectures, Seminars, Conferences." (KFT)

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Teangeolas

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Journal of the Linguistics Institute of Ireland

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Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann
The Linguistics Institute of Ireland

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Foilsítear *Teangeolas* dhá uair sa bhliain. Tá sí ar fáil saor in aisce ó: ITÉ (Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann), 31 Plás Mhic Liam, Baile Átha Cliath 2.

Is é cuspóir na hirise eolas a scaipeadh ar shaothar ITÉ agus ailt a sholáthar ar ghnéithe éagsúla den teangeolaíocht fheidhmeach agus ar fhoghlaim agus ar theagasc beotheangacha.
Eagarthóir: Íosold Ní Dheirg (ITÉ)

Teangeolas is published twice a year. It is available free from: ITÉ (Linguistics Institute of Ireland), 31 Fitzwilliam Place, Dublin 2.

The aim of the journal is to disseminate information on the work of ITÉ and to publish articles on different aspects of applied linguistics and on the learning and teaching of living languages.
Editor: Íosold Ó Deirg (ITÉ)

Cúrsaí na hInstitiúide

Teangeolaíocht Struchtúrtha

Dónall Ó Baoill
Ceapadh an Ceann Roinne, an Dr Dónall Ó Baoill, ina Ollamh le Gaeilge in Ollscoil na Ríona, Béal Feirste, i mí an Mheithimh, 1999. As Mín an Chladaigh i nGaeltacht Thír Chonaill do Dhónall. Dhein sé a chuid staidéir i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Gaillimh, agus in Ollscoil Mhichigan sna Stáit Aontaithe, mar ar bhain sé amach céim Ph.D. sa Teangeolaíocht. Fiú sular imigh sé go Meiriceá i 1969, bhí sé gafa le teangeolaíocht na Gaeilge agus é ag obair leis an Athair Colmán Ó Huallacháin i mBaile Mhic Gormáin. Ar a theacht ar ais dó go hÉirinn i 1973, ceapadh é ina oifigeach taighde in ITÉ. As sin go ham seo d'oibrigh sé ar shraith staidéar agus tionscadal a chuir go mór le teangeolaíocht na Gaeilge comhaimseartha. Chuir sé an teangeolaíocht i gcoitinne chun cinn sa tír seo.

Ag breathnú siar ar a shaothar, cuimhneofar gan amhras ar *Urchúrsa Gaeilge* (1980, 1992), cúrsa triú leibhéil i scríobh na Gaeilge a d'ullmhaigh sé i gcomhar le Conchúr Ó Rónáin ar dtús, agus ansin le hÉamon Ó Tuathail nach maireann, agus a bhfuil breis is 10,000 cóip de díolta faoin am seo. Ach ní féidir Dónall a nascadh le haon fhoilseachán ar leith de bharr go raibh sé gníomhach i saothrú na teangeolaíochta san oiread sin slite. Bhí sé ina eagarthóir ar *Teanga*, iris Chumann na Teangeolaíochta Feidhmí in Éirinn le fada, agus is é atá ina Uachtarán ar an gCumann faoi láthair.

Sna blianta tosaigh dá thréimhse in ITÉ, dhein sé staidéar ceannródaíochta, *Réamhfhocail le Briathra na Gaeilge* (1975), i gcomhar le Tomás Ó Domhnalláin, ar naoi gcinn de bhriathra móra na Gaeilge, *bain, cuir, déan*, srl., bunaithe ar chorpas 100,000 focal comhrá a bhailigh an tAthair Colmán. Bhain an bheirt údar leas as an gcur chuige staitistiúil arís in *Earráidí Scríofa Gaeilge* (1978, 1979, 1981), staidéar ar chorpas scripteanna Gaeilge na hArdteistiméireachta 1975. I 1975 a

Institute Matters

Structural Linguistics

Dónall Ó Baoill
The Head of the Department, Dr Dónall Ó Baoill, was appointed Professor of Irish in Queen's University, Belfast, in June, 1999. A native of Mín an Chladaigh in the Donegal Gaeltacht, Dónall studied in University College, Galway, and in the University of Michigan, in the United States, where he was awarded a Ph.D. in Linguistics. Prior to his departure to America in 1969, he was involved in Irish linguistics, working with Father Colmán Ó Huallacháin in Gormanston. On his return to Ireland in 1973, he was appointed research officer in ITÉ, and since then he has worked on a series of studies and projects dealing with the linguistics of contemporary Irish, as well as promoting linguistics in general in this country.

Looking back at his work, Urchúrsa Gaeilge *(1980, 1992), the course in written Irish, prepared for third level students, written in collaboration, first with Conchúr Ó Rónáin, and subsequently with the late Éamon Ó Tuathail, springs to mind. More than 10,000 copies have been sold to date. Yet Dónall cannot be linked to any one publication, as he was active in many different areas of linguistics. For many years he was editor of* Teanga, *organ of the Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, of which he is currently President.*

In his early years in ITÉ he undertook in collaboration with Tomás Ó Domhnalláin, Réamhfhocail le Briathra na Gaeilge *(1975), a pioneering study on nine of the key verbs of Irish,* bain, cuir, déan, *etc., based on a corpus of 100,000 spoken words collected by Father Colmán. The same statistical approach was used by the joint authors in* Earráidí Scríofa Gaeilge *(1978, 1979, 1981), a study on a corpus of 1975 Leaving Certificate scripts. At this time he also published* Cleachtaí

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d'fhoilsigh sé *Cleachtaí Foghraíochta*, cúrsa foghraíochta a bhfuil éileamh leanúnach air ó shin.

D'fhill sé ar an bhfoghraíocht arís nuair a d'iarr An Gúm air fuaimniú a mholadh do gach ceannfhocal sa *Foclóir Póca* (1986), tasc a chuir bun le *Lárchanúint don Ghaeilge*, caighdeán fuaimnithe a cheap sé agus a foilsíodh i 1986. Rinne sé cúram de na canúinti chomh maith sa tsraith *An Teanga Bheo*, i gcomhar le Séamas Ó Murchú (Coláiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath) agus le Diarmaid Ó Sé. Is faoi stiúir Dhónaill a dhein bodhair na tíre seo an chéad suirbhé náisiúnta ar a dteanga féin, agus is chomhúdar é ar an dara cuid den staidéar, a bhaineann le teangeolaíocht chomharthaíochta.

Foghraíochta, *a course in phonetics which is continuously in demand since.*

In the 1980s, he returned to phonetics when An Gúm invited him to recommend a single pronunciation for each headword in the pocket dictionary Foclóir Póca *(1986). This task formed the basis for* Lárchanúint don Ghaeilge, *a standard pronunciation he developed and which was published in 1986. In collaboration with Séamas Ó Murchú, University College Dublin, and Diarmuid Ó Sé, he turned his attention also to dialects in the series* An Teanga Bheo. *It was he too who guided the deaf community in carrying out the first national survey on their own language, and he is joint author of the second volume of the study, which deals with the linguistics of sign.*

Thug sé cabhair do na heagrais Ghaeilge uair ar bith a raibh sin uathu, do na bodhair agus do mhúinteoirí na mbodhar. Roinn sé a chuid eolais ar an nGaeilge agus ar an teangeolaíocht go fial foighdeach ar fhoireann na hInstitiúide. Braithfimid uainn go mór é.

Guimid gach rath air féin agus ar a bhean, Máire, sa saol nua atá rompu i mBéal Feirste.

Dónall assisted the Irish language organisations as well as the deaf community and teachers of the deaf. His knowledge of Irish and linguistics was generously and patiently made available to the staff of the Institute, who will greatly miss him.

Our best wishes go with him and his wife, Máire, in their new life in Belfast.

Diarmuid Ó Sé

Ceapadh Diarmuid Ó Sé ina Léachtóir i Roinn na Gaeilge i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, ag deireadh an tsamhraidh. Tá sé ag fágáil na hInstitiúide agus é ag cur bailchríche ar an saothar is mó a raibh sé gafa leis ó thánig sé anseo i 1982, cuntas cuimsitheach teangeolaíochta ar Ghaeilge Chorca Dhuibhne. Tá blaiseadh beag den leabhar le fáil cheana féin sa leabhrán a chuir sé amach ar an gcanúint chéanna sa tsraith *An Teanga Beo* i 1995.

Chuir Diarmuid ailt ar theangeolaíocht na Nua-Ghaeilge i gcló go rialta sna hirisí léannta le linn a théarma anseo, agus d'fhoilsigh Hodder & Stoughton *Teach Yourself Irish* (a scríobh sé i gcomhar le Joe Sheils) i 1993. Anuas air seo thug sé léachtaí ar theangeolaíocht na Gaeilge i gColáiste na Tríonóide agus i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath.

Diarmuid Ó Sé

Diarmuid Ó Sé was appointed Lecturer in the Irish Department, University College, Dublin, at the end of the summer, 1999. He is leaving us just as he is putting the finishing touches to the work that took up most of his time since he came to ITÉ in 1982: a comprehensive linguistic account of the Irish of West Kerry. A sample of the material in the book can be found in the booklet published earlier in the series An Teanga Bheo *(1995).*

Diarmuid published articles on the linguistics of Modern Irish regularly in the scholarly journals during his time here, and Hodder & Stoughton published Teach Yourself Irish, *which he wrote with Joe Sheils in 1993. In addition, he lectured on the linguistics of Irish in Trinity College and at University College Dublin.*

Nuatheangacha

Ceapadh Angela Rickard mar oifigeach Fraincise. Tá céim sa Fhraincis agus sa Bhéarla aici ó Choláiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, mar aon le hArd-Teastas san Oideachas. Chaith sí tréimhsí ag múineadh in Éirinn, sa Fhrainc agus in Québec. D'fheidhmigh sí mar léachtóir cúnta in Ollscoil Chathair Átha Cliath agus mar mhonatóir ar chleachtadh múinteoireachta i gclár an Ard-Teastais san Oideachas in Ollscoil Náisiúnta na hÉireann, Maigh Nuad. Táthar ag súil go mbeidh Lárionad Acmhainní Foghlama Teangacha ar oscailt don phobal go luath san athbhliain, in Uimhir 35 Plás Mhic Liam, Baile Átha Cliath 2. Is éard atá sa Lárionad, áis do mhúinteoirí agus d'fhoghlaimeoirí teangacha bunaithe ar áiseanna foghlama fioriúla. Tá cúram réiteach an Lárionaid ar Angela.

Séala na hEorpa 1999

Ar iarratas na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, leanadh ar aghaidh le stiúradh thionscnamh Séala na hEorpa i mbliana mar a rinneadh anuraidh. Tá na hiarratais faoi bhráid na moltóirí faoi láthair. Ghniomhaigh David Barnwell mar shaineolaí ar ghiúiré na hIorua, a tháinig le chéile i mí na Samhna.

Cúrsaí Tástála

D'ullmhaigh an rannóg scrúduithe CNCG le cur ar bhreis is 6,000 mac léinn Iodáilise, Gearmáinise, Spáinnise, Fraincise agus Gaeilge agus ba iad na príomhscrúdaitheoirí i rith tréimhse marcála na dteangacha sin.

Táthar ag leanúint leis an taighde a rinneadh anuraidh ar thástáil chumas teanga na ndaoine atá ag freastal ar chúrsaí i Teileamhargaíocht Idirnáisiúnta. In earrach na bliana 1999, cuireadh scrúdú béil ar thart ar 30 mac léinn mar ghrúpa samplach. Scrúdaíodh an grúpa go léir, thart ar 300 mac léinn, san fhómhair. Tá tuarascáil ar na torthaí á hullmhú faoi láthair.

Roghnaíodh ITÉ le bheith páirteach i dtréimhse phiolótach DIALANG, córas nua le trialacha teanga a chur ar fáil ar ríomhaire agus ar an idirlíon. Tá an leagan Spáinnise agus an leagan Iodáilise ar fáil anois. Beidh na trialacha sin ar fáil go luath san athbhliain mar áis do chuile

Modern Languages

Angela Rickard has been appointed French officer. A graduate of University College, Dublin in French and English, she holds also the Higher Diploma in Education. She has taught in schools in Ireland, France and Québec. More recently she has been employed as an assistant lecturer in Dublin City University and in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, where she worked as a teaching practice supervisor on the Higher Diploma in Education programme. The Language Teaching Resource Centre is expected to be open to the public early in the new year, in No. 35 Fitzwillam Place, Dublin 2. The Centre will provide assistance, based on virtual learning aids, to teachers and language learners. Angela is responsible for the preparatory work involved.

The European Seal 1999

At the request of the Department of Education and Science, direction of the European Seal was continued this year, as last year. The results are being considered at present by the adjudicators. David Barnwell served as invited expert on the Norwegian jury, which met in November.

Testing Matters

The Department prepared the NCVA examinations for over 6,000 students of Italian, German, Spanish, French and Irish and served as chief examiners during the marking period.

Research conducted last year on testing the language ability of persons attending International Telemarketing courses was continued. In spring 1999 an oral examination was carried out on a sample group of 30 students, and in the Autumn the entire group of some 300 students was examined. A report is in preparation on the results.

ITÉ was chosen to take part in a pilot period with DIALANG, a new scheme involving the provision of language tests on computer and anyone wishing to determine his/her ability on the internet. The Spanish version and the Italian version are now available. Both tests

dhuine ar mhian leis/léi a leibhéal cumais sna teangacha sin a mheas.

Spáinnis agus Iodáilis
Ghlac David Barnwell agus Anne Clark le ról comairleoireachta maidir le tionscadal na Roinne Oideachais chun múineadh na Spáinnise agus na hIodáilise a spreagadh. Cuireadh áiseanna ITÉ ar fáil dóibh siúd atá i mbun an taighde agus ullmhú na tuarascála. Ag cruinniú in ITÉ i mí an Mheithimh, bunaíodh Fóram na Spáinnise ar a bhfuil ionadaithe ó ITÉ, ó na scoileanna agus ó ambasáidí Mheicsiceo agus na Spáinne chun an Spáinnis a chur chun cinn sa tír seo. Ar iarratas ón nGúm, táimid ag obair le Pádraig Ó Domhnalláin ar fhoclóir Spáinnis-Gaeilge, Gaeilge-Spáinnis. Tá an tUasal Ó Domhnalláin ag múineadh Gaeilge do Spáinnigh i Maidrid le blianta fada.

ScoilNet
Ghníomhaigh Anne Clark mar shaineolaí Iodáilise i suíomh idirlín (www.scoilnet.ie) a bhunaigh an Chomhairle Náisiúnta um Theicneolaíocht san Oideachas, CNCM, agus Intel ar 15 Meán Fómhair 1999. Soláthraíonn an suíomh acmhainní eolais ar gach leibhéal do mhúinteoirí, do dhaltaí agus do thuismitheoirí, ina measc acmhainní do scrúduithe agus liosta suíomh idirlín a mb'fhiú a cheadú.

FABULA (http://www.fabula-eu.org)
Tá dhá theanga in úsáid i gcuid mhaith de bhunscoileanna an AE, agus cuireadh an tionscadal FABULA ar bun, le cabhair airgid ón Aontas, chun cás ar leith a iniúchadh, is é sin, nuair is mórtheanga idirnáisiúnta í an chéad teanga, agus teanga bheag náisiúnta nó réigiúnach an dara ceann. Is iad na péirí teanga sa tionscadal, Spáinnis-Bascais, Spáinnis-Catalóinis, Dúitsis-Freaslainnis, Béarla-Breatnais agus Béarla-Gaeilge. Go bunúsach, gléas eagarthóireachta is ea FABULA a chuirfidh ar chumas na ndaltaí scéalta a chur le chéile, téacs, pictiúirí agus fuaimeanna san áireamh, sa dá theanga, agus a chur ar an idirlíon. DTP Workshop, Cros Araild, agus ITÉ na conraitheoirí as Éirinn, agus tá dhá scoil ag glacadh páirte, Scoil Phlás Chill Dara, Ráth Maonais (Príomhoide: Hazel Allen) agus

will be available early in the New Year to those wishing to assess their ability level in these languages.

Spanish and Italian
David Barnwell and Anne Clark have accepted an advisory role in connection with the Department of Education's project designed to promote the teaching of Spanish and Italian. Facilities of ITÉ were made available to those carrying out the research and compiling the report. A committee, The Forum for Spanish, was set up in ITÉ in June, composed of representatives from ITÉ, the schools, and the embassies of Mexico and Spain to promote Spanish in this country. At the request of An Gúm, *we are working with Pádraig Ó Domhnalláin on a Spanish-Irish, Irish-Spanish dictionary. Mr Ó Domhnalláin has been teaching Irish to Spaniards in Madrid for many years.*

ScoilNet
Anne Clark has participated as a subject specialist (Italian) in the ScoilNet, a website (www.scoilnet.ie) established on 15 September 1999 by the National Council for Technology in Education, NCCA and Intel. The website provides teachers, pupils and parents with resources geared to all levels. Included are resources for examinations and lists of websites worth consulting.

FABULA (http://www.fabula-eu.org)
Two languages are in use in primary schools all over the EU, and the FABULA project, part-funded by the Union, was set up to examine one particular case, where the first language is a major international language, and the second one a smaller national or regional language. The language pairs in the project are Spanish-Basque, Spanish-Catalan, Dutch-Fresian, English-Welsh and English-Irish. Essentially FABULA is an authoring tool that will enable pupils to compile stories on the computer, including text, pictures and sounds, in both languages, and to place them on the internet. The Irish contractors are DTP Workshop, Harold's Cross, and ITÉ, and two schools are involved, Kildare Place National School, Rathmines (Principal: Hazel Allen) and Coolderry Central School, Birr, Co Offaly

LárScoil Chúl Doire, Biorr, Uibh Faili (Príomhoide: Pádraig de Báth), http://homepages.iol.ie/~ednet1. Tionóladh cruinnithe in ITÉ i mí Márta agus in Barcelona i mí na Samhna.

C'est Ça II
Tá an dara himleabhar de *C'est Ça* ar fáil anois, agus an chuma air go bhfuil sé á úsáid i go leor scoileanna sa tír.

An tIdirlíon
Tá dul chun cinn déanta maidir le leathanach idirlín na Rannóige. Tig le duine ar bith scríobh chugainn (nua@ite.ie) chun eolas a fháil ar ghnéithe de mhúineadh teangacha in Éirinn, mar shampla fadhbanna gramadaí nó deiseanna oibre nó staidéir.

Chuir Roinn na Nuatheangacha tús le comórtas faoi Nollaig inar bronnadh duaiseanna ar an scoil a bhain an leas ab fhearr as ábhar faoin Nollaig as Fraincis, Iodáilis, Spáinnis agus Gearmáinis ar idirlíon na Roinne. Scoil na Mainistreach, Tiobraid Árann agus Meánscoil na nUrsalach, Port Láirge, na buaiteoirí.

(Principal: Patrick Bates), http://homepages.iol.ie/~ednet1. Meetings were held in ITÉ in March, and in Barcelona in November.

C'est Ça II
The second volume of C'est Ça *is now available. It appears that it is in use in many schools throughout the country.*

The Internet
Progress has been made relating to the department's page on the Internet. Any person can now write to us (nua@ite.ie) for information on aspects of language teaching in Ireland, for example problems with grammar, or opportunities for work or study.

The Department of Modern Languages inaugurated a Christmas competition, in which prizes were awarded for the best use of the Christmas-related materials in French, Italian, Spanish and German available on the department's web site. Winners were the Abbey School in Tipperary and the Ursuline Secondary School in Waterford.

Socheolaíocht Teanga

Ról na Suirbhéanna Teanga sa Phróiseas Pleanála
Scrúdaíonn an tionscadal idirnáisiúnta seo tionchar suirbhéanna teanga ar shubstaint agus ar threo polasaithe teanga faoi stiúradh Phádraig Uí Riagáin. Tionóladh an chéad chruinniú de na taighdeoirí i Márta, 1999, agus beidh an obair ag críochnú i nDeireadh Fómhair, 1999. Íocfaidh Coimisiún na hEorpa as 50% de chostas an tionscadail.

Nuatheangacha in Éirinn (foghlaim, cumas, dearcadh an phobail)
Tá an tionscadal seo ag teacht chun deiridh anois. (Féach lch. 60)

Eolas ar an nGaeilge/Facts about Irish
Tá leabhrán á ullmhú ina mbeidh cur síos gairid, táblaí, agus léaráidí ar na príomhthascairí staitistiúla faoi chumas, úsáid

Sociology of Language

The Role of Language Surveys in the Planning Process
This international project under the direction of Pádraig Ó Riagáin examines the impact of language surveys on the substance and direction of language policies. The first meeting of the researchers was held in March 1999, and the work will be completed in October 1999. The European Commission will undertake 50% of the costs of the project.

Modern European Languages in Ireland (learning, competence, public attitudes)
The study is now in course of completion.
(See Page 60)

Eolas ar an nGaeilge/Facts about Irish
A booklet is in preparation which will contain a concise account, with tables and diagrams of the primary statistical indicators concerning

agus faoi dhearcadh an phobail i leith na Gaeilge. Pádraig Ó Riagáin agus Teresa Gorman atá i mbun na hoibre. Bunófar an leabhrán ar *Indicateurs de la situation linguistique au Québec* (Conseil de la langue française, 1991). Is ar iarratas ó Bhord naGaeilge atá an obair seo ar siúl, agus íocfaidh an Bord cuid den chostas.

Comhairle na hEorpa
Scríobh Pádraig Ó Riagáin agus an tOllamh Mike Byram (Ollscoil Durham) páipéar dar teideal *Language diversity and democratic citizenship in Europe: towards a framework for language education policies* don Chomhairle. Pléadh an páipéar ar chomhdháil a d'eagraigh an Chomhairle, ar a raibh an teideal agus an téama céanna, in Innsbruck, 10-12 Bealtaine, 1999.

Tá Pádraig Ó Riagáin agus an tOllamh Georges Lüdi (Ollscoil Basle) ag scríobh leabhráin do Chomhairle na hEorpa: *Bilingual Education: Key Policy Issues*. Tá dréacht á leasú faoi láthair.

An Eagraíocht um Chomhar agus Shlándáil na hEorpa
I mBealtaine, 1999, thug an Eagraíocht cuireadh do Phádraig Ó Riagáin páirt a ghlacadh mar shaineolaí ar pholasaí teanga, i seimineáir faoi chomhtháthú na bpobal iasachta sa Laitvia.

Síctheangeolaíocht

Tionscadal Nua Taighde
Seoladh mórthuarascáil taighde *Teaching and learning Irish in primary school* (John Harris & Lelia Murtagh) ar 4 Bealtaine, 1999 in Ostán Buswell. Seán Ó Fiachra, Leas-Phríomh-Chigire a sheol an leabhar.

Tionscadal na dTuismitheoirí
Tá deireadh leis an gcéad chuid den Scéim Phíolótach ar ról na dtuismitheoirí agus tá tuarascáil eatramhach á scríobh faoi láthair. D'fhág Seán Ó Cathalláin, comhúdar na Tuarascála, go luath tóisc post léachtóra a bheith faighte aige i gColáiste Phádraig, Droim

ability, use and public attitudes relating to Irish. The compilers are Pádraig Ó Riagáin and Teresa Gorman. The booklet will be based on Indicateurs de la situation linguistique au Québec *(Conseil de la langue française, 1991). The work was undertaken at the request of Bord na Gaeilge. Part of the cost will be financed by An Bord.*

The Council of Europe
Pádraig Ó Riagáin and Professor Mike Byram (Durham University) wrote a paper entitled Language diversity and democratic citizenship in Europe: towards a framework for language education policies *for the Council of Europe. The paper was discussed at a conference organised by the Council, having the same theme and title, in Innsbruck, 10-12 May, 1999.*

A booklet is being prepared by Pádraig Ó Riagáin and Professor Georges Lüdi (University of Basle) for the Council: Bilingual Education: Key Policy Issues. *A draft version is being amended at present.*

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
The organisation in May 1999 invited Pádraig Ó Riagáin to participate as an expert in language planning in seminars dealing with the integration of foreign communities in Latvia.

Psycholinguistics

A New Research Report
A major research report, Teaching and learning Irish in primary schools *(John Harris & Lelia Murtagh) was launched in Buswell's Hotel on 4 May, 1999 by Seán Ó Fiachra, Deputy Chief Inspector.*

Parents and Irish
The first part of the Pilot Scheme on the role of parents has been completed, and an interim report is currently in preparation. The Project Officer engaged in this work for the past year, Seán Ó Cathalláin, joint author of the report, has left ITÉ, having secured a post in St.

Conrach. Guimid rath is beannacht air sa phost nua.

Patrick's College, Drumcondra. We wish him well in his new post.

Nuatheangacha sa Bhunscoil
Cuireadh ceistneoirí chuig na múinteoirí go léir a bhí páirteach in Tionscadal na Nuatheangacha sa Bhunscoil i mí Bealtaine. Tá anailís déanta ar na sonraí agus tá tús curtha le tuarascáil eatramhach ar an gcuid seo den taighde. Baileofar sonraí amach anseo.

Modern Languages in Primary Schools
Questionnaires were sent to all the teachers who participated in the Modern Languages in Primary Schools Project. The results have been analysed, and the writing of an interim report on this part of the research has begun. Further details will be collected later.

CD-ROM chun Ábhar seachas an Ghaeilge a Theagasc trí Ghaeilge
Tá CD-ROM ilmheánach á ullmhú chun Gaeilge a theagasc do pháistí 12-13 bliain d'aois trí ghnéithe de ábhair eile scoile - Tíreolaíocht, Stair, Ealaín, Eolaíocht Imshaoil agus Ceol - a theagasc dóibh trí mheán na Gaeilge. Is cuid de thionscadal ilnáisiúnach *Socrates* é seo a bhfuil cúig theanga ar fad ann: Béarla, Iodáilis, Spáinnis, Ollainnis agus Gaeilge.

CD-ROM for Teaching Subjects apart from Irish through Irish
A multi-media CD-ROM is in preparation to teach Irish to children 12-13 years by teaching aspects of other school subjects - Geography, History, Art, Environmental Science and Music - through the medium of Irish. This forms part of a 'Socrates' multi-national project involving five languages in all: English, Italian, Spanish, Dutch and Irish.

Ceapadh Oifigeach Tionscadail, Eibhlín Ní Scannláin, le déanaí chun dul ag obair le John Harris. Beidh sise freagrach as dréachtaí de ábhar Béarla a aistriú agus a oiriúnú do theagasc na Gaeilge.

Eibhlín Ní Scannláin has recently been appointed Project Officer, and she will be working with John Harris. She will be responsible for translating drafts of material in English and adapting it to teaching Irish.

Tá John Harris ceaptha mar bhall de Bhord Oideachais an Irish Speech and Language Therapists Association.

John Harris has been appointed a member of the Education Board of the Irish Speech and Language Therapists.

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Imeachtaí Foirne *Staff Activities*

EOGHAN MAC AOGAIN

- Big and small in EU language policy. In: A.F. Christidis - ed. *'Strong' and 'Weak' Languages in the European Union: Aspects of Linguistic Hegemonism*. Vol. 1, 1999. pp. 285-96. Thesssaloniki, Centre for the Greek Language.
- (with C. Breatnach, S. Ni Mhaonaigh, & D.P. Ó Baoill) Gaeilge. In: M. Milanovich - ed. Multilingual Glossary of Language Testing Terms. Cambridge. Cambridge U.P., 1998. (Book & CD)
- (with A. Byrne & D.P. Ó Baoill) *A Breakthrough Specification for Irish*. Dublin. ITE, 1998.

PADRAIG Ó RIAGAIN

- Seminar on *Language Policy Monitoring Systems* with officials of the Estonian Ministry of Education. Joint Programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe for assistance with the integration of populations of foreign origin in Estonia and Latvia. Tallinn, 2-3 October 1998.
- Seminar on *Language Policy Monitoring Systems* with officials of Latvian Ministry of Education. Joint Programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe for assistance with the integration of populations of foreign origin in Estonia and Latvia. Riga, 1998.
- Round Table on *Big Cities and Minorities*, organised by the Council of Europe in co-operation with the Department for International Relations of the Ministry of National Policy of the Russian Federation. Moscow, 10-11 December 1998.
- *Linguistic diversity and democratic citizenship: the perspective of minority indigenous languages*: paper presented at the conference on Linguistic Diversity for Democratic Citizenship in Europe: Towards a Framework for Language Education Policies. Innsbruck, 10-12 May 1999.
  Irish Language Production and Reproduction 1981-1996. To be published in
- J. Fishman - ed. *Reversing Language Shift Revisited*. Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter.
  (with M. Byram) Language
- *Language diversity and democratic citizenship in Europe: towards a framework for language education policies*. Council of Europe Document DECS/EDU/LANG(99)6. Stasbourg, Council of Europe, 1998.

DAVID BARNWELL

- *Encouraging research-based reflection among language teachers*: paper, symposium on language teacher education, University of Edinburgh, 18 November 1999.
- *'Find & Move' and other Reading Comprehension Tasks in Spanish*: paper, Foreign Language Conference, Youngstown State University, Ohio, 23 October 1998.
- *Working on the World Wide Web*: paper, Southern Conference on Language Teaching, Virginia Beach, Virginia, 8 March 1999.
- *The Current Status of Spanish in the United States*: paper, Conference on Interdisciplinary Approaches to Latin America, University of Limerick, 1 July 1999.
- *Court Interpretation and Translation*: paper, Conference on Language for Special Purposes, Bolzano, Italy, 31 August 1999.

ANNE CLARK

- Project manager and co-ordinator of *Il Mondo dei Giovani*: a Lingua-funded collection of authentic Italian reading, writing and listening materials for 13-16 year old students, May 1999.
- Meeting with IRRSAE Lombardia on *La dimensione europea nell scuola superiore*, September 13-15 1998.

JOHN HARRIS

Cruinniú de chuid Socrates faoi thionscadal an Dlúthdhiosca CLA (cuimhne léimh amháin), Sitges, 4-5 Meitheamh 1999.
(with Lelia Murtagh) *Teaching and learning Irish in primary school*

TINA HICKEY

- *Luathoideachas tri Ghaeilge sa Ghaeltacht*. Baile Átha Cliath, Údarás na Gaeltachta & ITÉ, 1999.
- (le foilsiú) Caibidil ar Shealbhú na Gaeilge mar Chéad Teanga, Sealbhú an Dara Teanga, an tSochtheangeolaíocht, an Tumoideachas, in: D. Uí Ghrádaigh - eag. *Treoirleabhar do Stiúrthóirí Naíonraí*. Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Tuismitheoirí agus an tumréamhscolaíocht. *Teangeolas*, 37, 1998.
- *Second language acquisition in Irish-medium playgroups: evaluating early Irish immersion in Ireland*. Proceedings of Institute of Immersion, 3rd international conference, Barcelona, Institute of Immersion, 1998.
- Early immersion in Ireland: the Naíonra experience, in: V. Regan - ed. *Contemporary approaches to second language acquisition*. Dublin, UCD Academic Press, 1998.
- *An Leabharlann, an Léitheoir Óg agus an Ghaeilge*: léacht ag Comhdháil do na Leabharlannaithe Poiblí, eagraithe ag Bord na Gaeilge agus Cumann na Leabharlannaithe Poiblí, Cill Rónáin, Inis Mór, 4 Meán Fómhair 1998.

Léachtaí

- *Mixing beginners and native speakers in minority language immersion: who is immersing whom?* Paper, 4th European Conference on Immersion Programmes, Trinity College Carmarthen, Wales, 16-19 September 1998.
- *Early immersion education: a national study of acquisition of Irish in the Naíonraí*: key address at the annual meeting of Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Aberystwyth, May 1998.

LELIA MURTAGH

Léachtaí

- Cúrsa ar *Shealbhú an Dara Teanga Dátheangachas* do mhic léinn B.Ed. i gColáiste na Trionóide. An bhliain acadúil 1998-99.
- Léacht ar an dátheangachas do mhic léinn na tríú bliana i Roinn na Síceolaíochta i UCD, 17 Aibreán 1999.

Foilseacháin

- (with J. Harris) *Teaching and learning Irish in primary school*.

MICHEAL Ó GLIASAIN

- The decline of the Irish language in North Tipperary. *Tipperary Historical Journal*, 1999: 67-97

MAUREEN SMITH

- *Literature in the classroom*: paper, Seminar Gesellschaft der Deutschlehrer Irlands, Autumn Conference, *Literatur im Klassenzimmer auch im Bezug auf die Mündliche Prüfung*, Trinity College Dublin, 21 October 1998.
- Meeting of Education representatives of EU Ministries of Education, Begegnungen - *Teaching and testing of German as a foreign language*, Vienna, 1-8 December 1999.
- *Modern languge teaching methodology*: lecture series, Higher Diploma of Education, Hilary Term, Trinity College Dublin, 1999.

Eagarfhocal

Ba i samhradh na bliana 1990 a foilsiodh an chéad uimhir de *Teangeolas* a dhírigh ar na nuatheangacha in Éirinn (uimh. 27). Anois agus an Mhílaois buailte linn, is mithid spléachadh a thabhairt athuair ar an téama úd. Ar pholasaithe teanga is mó a bhí uimh. 27 dírithe; ar phraitic is mó a dhíritear sa sainuimhir seo.

Cuireann David Barnwell ceann ar an uimhir seo le cuntas cuimsitheach ar theagasc teangacha seachas Béarla sna Stáit Aontaithe ó achtú an Bhunreachta go ham seo. Is léir gur iomaí deacracht a bhí agus atá fós ag múinteoirí teanga sna Stáit.

Leargas cruinn géar a thugann Edward Bressan duinn ar an teileamhargaíocht, réimse nua oibre a mbeidh gealladh faoi sa tír seo ach teacht ar fhostaithe a mbeidh na scileanna is gá chuige acu. Rianaítear na scileanna riachtanacha, eolas a d'eascair as taithí an údair féin ar an teileamhargaíocht, agus na hathruithe praiticiúla atá le déanamh ar shiollabas an chursa oiliúna le deimhniú go mbeidh na scileanna cuí ag na fostaithe.

Dea-sceal aduaidh atá le ríomh ag Seán Mac Corraidh faoin gcúrsa nua atá leagtha amach aige d'ábhar bunmhúinteoirí agus do mhúinteoirí atá nó a bheidh ag teagasc i nGaelscoileanna. Go bhfios dúinn, seo an chéad chursa dá shórt in Éirinn. Is díol spéise an t-alt seo d'oideachasóirí agus do mhúinteoirí Gaelscoile ar fud na tíre.

Is fiú guth a thabhairt anois is arís do theangeolaí ón iasacht. Dírionn an tOllamh Majewicz ón bPolainn ar pholasaithe teanga an Aontais Eorpaigh san alt 'Languages and language policies in the EU'. Dearcadh réalaíoch, neodrach a nochtar san alt a thugann ábhar machnaimh dóibh siúd ar cás leo a bhfuil i ndán do theangacha idir bheag is mhór san am atá le teacht.

Editorial

The first number of Teangeolas *devoted to the modern languages in Ireland was no. 37, published in the summer of 1990. Now that the Millennium is upon us, it is time to cast a glance once more on the topic. The previous issue was devoted mainly to language policies; the present issue is devoted mainly to practical matters.*

The first article by David Barnwell consists of a comprehensive account of the teaching of languages other than English in the United States, from the enactment of the Constitution until time of writing. It would appear that language teachers in the U.S. faced, and continue to face, many difficulties.

Edward Bressan subjects the new field of Telemarketing in Ireland to a sharp scrutiny. Telemarketing is an occupation which offers employment opportunities to many people provided they possess the skills required for the work. A description of the skills in question, derived from the author's own experience of telemarketing, is presented, together with practical recommendations relating to changes in the syllabus of the training course to ensure that the employees acquire the skills needed.

Seán Mac Corraidh brings good news from the North regarding a new course designed by him for teachers in training and primary teachers who are, or who will be, teaching in Irish-medium schools. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first course of its kind in Ireland. The article will be of special interest to educationalists and teachers in Irish-medium schools everywhere.

It is advisable now and again to hear the views of linguists from abroad on matters which concern us. Professor Majewicz of Poland shares with us his 'haphazard' reflections on European language policies in his 'Languages and language policies in the EU'. The views presented, which are realistic and neutral, provide material for thought for those who care for the future of languages both small and great.

Cuid de thionscadal fadtéarmach atá ar bun i bhforas tríú leibhéil i dTrá Lí atá faoi chaibidil ag Muiris Ó Laoire. Díritear ar thionchar na taithí meiteatheangeolaíche a ghnóthaigh scoláirí nuatheangacha as foghlaim na Gaeilge ar scoil mar T2 ar a straitéisí foghlama agus iad i mbun sealbhú T3/T4. Beifear ag dúil go mór leis an chéad alt eile ar an ábhar seo.

Muiris Ó Laoire's article describes the first part of a longterm project in progress in a third-level institution in Tralee. It consists of a study of the effects of metalinguistic knowledge gained by modern language students who learned Irish as L2 at school on the learning strategies they use in the study of L3 L4. The next article on this topic is awaited with interest.

Soláthraíonn Pádraig Ó Riagáin agus Teresa Gorman scrúdú mion ar scéal na nuatheangacha sa stát. Baintear leas chuige sin as staitistící na Roinne Oideachais agus an *Eurobarometer*. Tagraítear chomh maith do thorthaí an tsuirbhé a rinne ITÉ i 1993. Léiríonn na sonraí seo go bhfuil méadú tagtha ar líon na scoláirí a thugann faoi scrúduithe nuatheangacha an stáit (tá scrúduithe tríú leibhéil san áireamh).

Pádraic Ó Riagáin and Teresa Gorman present the results of a detailed study on the situation of modern languages in the state. Statistics of the Department of Education and the Eurobarometer *are used to that end. Reference is also made to the survey carried out by ITÉ in 1993. The resulting information indicates an increase in the number of candidates taking a foreign language in the state examinations (including those at third level).*

Oideachas i gcúrsaí teanga is ábhar d'alt Bill Richardson. Pléann sé na haidhmeanna difriúla a ghabhann le foghlaim teanga: ní mór, dar leis, dearcadh leathan, uileghabhálach a bheith mar bhun le staidéar ar theangacha. Cíorann sé trí ghné thábhachtacha a bhaineann le hábhar: nuálacha a tharla le tamall anuas i múineadh teangacha, staidéar 'feidhmeach' san áireamh, tionchar na teicneolaíochta agus an gaol idir an t-idirchultúrachas agus oideachas i gcúrsaí teanga.

Education in language is the subject of Bill Richardson's article, in which the different aims of language learning are discussed. In his view, a wide-ranging, unified vision of language education is required as a basis for language study. Three relevant aspects of importance are considered: innovations which have emerged in the last few years in language teaching, including 'applied' studies; the influence of technology and, lastly, the relation between interculturality and language education.

Is fiorthráthúil téama an ailt le Josephine Dolan agus Frédéric Royall, ina bpléitear impleachtaí an chláir rialtais IT2000 do theagasc/fhoghlaim na Fraincise, agus go deimhin teangacha eile chomh maith san iar-bhunscoil. Gléas foghlama an-éifeachtach is ea an tIdirlíon, agus is fiú go mór é a úsáid. Feictear do na húdair gur bac ar úsáid an Idirlín é córas scrúdúcháin an stáit, a bhuanaíonn cur chuige cúng, traidisiúnta sa seomra ranga. Fadhb í seo, is léir, nach mór don Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta a réiteach luath nó mall.

Josephine Dolan and Frédéric Royall present a timely theme, in which the implications of the government's IT2000 plan for the teaching of French, and indeed other languages in post-primary schools are discussed. The Internet is an extremely efficient learning tool, and is well worth using. The authors believe that the state's examination system does not facilitate use of the Internet, because it perpetuates a narrow, traditional approach in the classroom. This is obviously a problem which must be dealt with by the Department of Education and Science sooner or later.

Teicníc nua foghlamtha teanga is ea foghlaim beirte. Is éard atá i gceist, cumarsáid bhéil ina mbíonn beirt chainteoirí dúchais, nach ionann teanga dóibh, páirteach. Cothaíonn an teicníc seo foghlaim féinriartha, sealbhú teanga agus feasacht idirchultúrtha. Baineadh triail as

Tandem learning is a new technique in use for language learning. It consists of face-to-face oral communication in which two native speakers of different languages take part. The technique facilitates autonomous learning, language acquisition and intercultural

foghlaim beirte i dTeanglann Choláiste Ollscoile Chorcaí, agus tugann Steve Walsh agus Sylvie Campion cúntas spéisiúil dúinn ar an gcur chuige, ar dhearcadh na rannpháirtithe agus ar na torthaí.

Is iomaí athrú a tháinig ar scéal na nuatheangacha ó 1990 i leith, mar a léirionn an sainuimhir seo den iris. Is léir go bhfuil fás is borradh faoi thaighde ar na nuatheangacha in Éirinn, agus go bhfuil taighdeoirí óga tagtha chun cinn. Is mór againn líon na scríbhneoirí a sholáthair ábhar don iris, agus fáiltíonn muid roimh na scríbhneoirí úra ina measc.

Gabhaimid buíochas leis na húdair uile, agus leis na moltóirí as a gcúnamh. Mar fhocal scoir, go n-éirí an Mhílaois libh, a scríbhneoirí agus a léitheoirí!

awareness. An experiment in tandem learning was carried out in the Language Centre of University College, Cork, and Steven Walsh and Sylvie Campion provide an interesting account of the approach used, the attitude of the participants and the results.

As this special issue of 'Teangeolas' demonstrates, the situation of modern languages has changed considerably since 1990. It is obvious that research on modern languages has grown and developed in this country, and that young researchers are coming forward. We are especially pleased with the many writers who have contributed to the journal, and we welome the new writers among them.

Our thanks go to all our contributors, and also to the referees for their help and advice. To both the contributors and our readers, we wish a happy and fruitful Millennium!

The Department of Modern Languages has set aside part of our premises in 35 Fitzwilliam Place as the location for a new Language Learning Resource Centre. We possess a large collection of language textbooks, syllabi, tests, journals and other teaching and testing materials. These resources cover all the main foreign languages taught in Ireland, and are available to the public. Persons wishing to make use of materials housed in our Language Resource Centre should phone in advance and arrange a time at which the appropriate member of our staff may be on hand to offer an information and advisory service. Limited borrowing privileges are also available.

During the course of 2000, the Department of Modern Languages will organise a number of workshops and seminars on topics of interest to foreign language teachers. Keep informed of these by checking ITÉ's website: *www.ite.ie*

Some Aspects of the Current State of Foreign Language Education In the United States

David Barnwell

There is no reference to language in either the American Declaration of Independence (1776) or the Constitution of the United States (1789). Hence by default the Constitution places responsibility for education in the hands of the individual states. There is, therefore, no federal policy on languages in education - the only exception being the 1990 Native American Languages Act, which states that it is the goal of the United States to preserve these languages. The United States education system is characterised by a high degree of local autonomy and decentralisation. Though there is a federal Department of Education, primary responsibility for education rests on the 'several states'. In just about every aspect of public administration there exists a long tradition of suspicion towards conceding power to the government in Washington. Indeed it is quite common to hear suggestions that the federal Department of Education be abolished, and a number of Republican candidates for President have included this among their policies.

These facts are relevant to the shape foreign language education has taken in the United States. There is no national curriculum; what will be taught in schools is decided and developed by local officials and teachers, at state, county and school level. Rather surprisingly, not all schools that teach foreign languages have a curriculum - over 10% report they do not[1]. There is no countrywide exit exam at the end of high school. Nationally administered exams - such as the College Boards' Advanced Placement tests - do exist, but these have specific purposes and are generally oriented towards the most capable students.

Educational planning, from macro to micro, must be carrried out within this loose structure. Even such an apparently simple matter as teacher certification/accreditation is affected. A teacher fully recognized and certified in one state may have to go once more through the whole tedious process of certification if she decides to move to another state. In order to establish her credentials, she will have to supply documentary evidence of all the years she is claiming in teaching experience, get official transcripts of degrees and courses taken, and argue her case for acceptance of all her teaching experience for seniority and salary credit. Obstacles such as these are made even worse in the case of foreign language teachers, since state certification agencies are notoriously unable or unwilling to allow credit for experience or study abroad. Moves to set up a federal or nationwide basis for teacher credentialing have been under way for some time, but are making slow progress.

Decisions which affect education tend to be made by legislators, the courts, and national and state commissions. At the local level, most influential are the school boards, democratically elected bodies which administer all the public schools in an area. State-wide, it is the legislators - members of the state's senate and house of representatives - who have responsibility for policy on education. Except for a minority of states, teachers' unions are not strong, but other professional groups take an active role in educational advocacy. Almost every state will have its foreign language teachers association, while countrywide bodies such as the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, the various American Associations of Teachers of German, French, Spanish and Portuguese, and the venerable Modern Languages Association can count many thousands of members.

All of this is not to say that the federal government exerts no influence on matters of language education or of education in general. As has been noted, there is a federal department of education, headed by a Secretary for Education[2]. Federal programs number more than 100, about 8% of the total spent in the United States on public education. They carry considerable weight because they offer to match funds from state and local educational agencies. Washington can set the policy agenda with reforms aiming at increasing opportunity and improving equity. If states wish to obtain federal monies for certain programs, they have to comply with federal requirements, and Washington uses its funding resources to leverage actions at state and local level. In fact there is ample precedent for federal government involvement in foreign language teaching. This began as early as the drive to teach languages to US military personnel during the Second World War (Angiolillo, 1947). A little later, the National Defense Education Act of 1955 gave much impetus to language teaching in the Cold War climate of the day. The activist federal government of the 1960s was responsible for several initiatives of relevance to language education. These included the Bilingual Education Act of 1965 and the Voting Rights Act (1968) which outlawed English literacy requirements for voters who had been educated through languages other than English, an endorsement of the status of Spanish among Puerto Ricans at home and on the mainland.

Often the federal involvement in foreign language education has arisen from seeing language competence as an issue with implications for national defense. The government has been especially interested in the less commonly taught languages, with a bias towards whatever areas abroad happened to be of greatest concern in US foreign policy. At various times the teaching of languages such as Vietnamese and Farsi has attracted federal funding. The 1992 National Security Education Act provides for the training of cadres of specialists in less commonly studied languages and regions of the world. The federal government has also involved itself directly in language teaching through such agencies as the Foreign Service Institute of the State Department, the Defense Language Institute of the Department of Defense, together with the language schools run by the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency and the Peace Corps[3]. In the last few years there has also been significant federal investment in the creation of a chain of Foreign Language Resource Centers thoughout the country[4].

On the whole, the greatest contribution of US federal involvement has been in the area of language testing. As early as the Second World War, Washington was encouraging the development of assessment instruments that would measure a soldier's ability to use a language for communication rather than his knowledge of discrete grammatical points (Kaulfers, 1944). In the 1950s this philosophy of testing was embodied in the creation of the Foreign Service Institute Oral Interview and rating scales (Rice, 1959). The format, in various manifestations, survives to this day and indeed has come to dominate many theoretical models for foreign language testing in the US and beyond. Federal money also helped to adopt the FSI test to the academic world, in the form of the ACTFL/ETS oral proficiency interview (ACTFL, 1982, 1986).

Recently, the federal government has attempted to introduce more centralisation into the education system. Perhaps the genesis of this may be traced to the 1979 *Strength Through Wisdom* report commissioned by President Carter, a document which expressed disquiet about the low level of national competence in foreign languages (Report, 1979). Carter's defeat and the arrival of the Reagan administration sidelined language study from the national agenda, but impetus was renewed by President Bush's calls for a long-term national educational strategy for the United States. These came to fruition in the document known as the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (US Department of Education, 1994). One of the mandates of Goals 2000 was 'to improve language instruction at all levels and to facilitate sequential learning'. For the first time ever, the stated national aim is for every student to graduate from high school with proficiency in a second language, Goals 2000 seeking to promote this by the development of

recommended goals and standards along the way. Foreign languages are considered core subjects in Goals 2000, actually a rather significant step forward for language education in the United States, since for so long it was viewed as optional, even peripheral.

Elementary Schools

The United States possesses a tradition of significant accomplishment, or perhaps more accurately effort, in the teaching of foreign languages at the primary or elementary school level. In the later 1950s and through much of the 1960s, FLES (Foreign Language in the Elementary School) programs were instituted throughout the country. These sprang up from the soul-searching about national educational standards that occurred in the wake of events such as the Soviet launch of Sputnik (1957) and Yuri Gagarin's space flight (1961). The 1970s saw something of a decline in attention to foreign language, and many of these programs atrophied. However, renewed interest from the early 1990s onwards saw a large number of states adding foreign language to the elementary school curriculum (Lipton, 1992). By 1997 the proportion of elementary schools offering a language had reached almost one in three (Branaman and Rhodes, 1998). When translated into student numbers, it should be stated, the figures are considerably less striking, since in many schools only a minority of pupils may actually be taking a foreign language. Further, the definition of what is entailed by foreign language learning is probably so wide as to preclude generalisation.

Leaving aside those caveats, some facts emerge clearly. Pupils at private schools are more likely to be studying foreign language. That language is probably Spanish, which is now installed in 79% of the elementary schools offering a foreign language. French has lost ground; from 41% of elementary schools offering foreign language instruction to 27% in the past decade. Most elementary schools offer foreign language classes for the entire school year, though there is a significant group which offers language for a limited period only, ranging from a couple of weeks to a semester. Nearly half of elementary schools report that one or more of their foreign language teachers is a native speaker of the language being taught. These figures are undoubtedly highest for Spanish, though in the American context the definition of native speaker of Spanish is not without ambiguity. The rapid expansion in the teaching of foreign languages in the elementary schools has produced a near crisis in staffing and training. Many states - North Carolina for example - which enthusiastically introduced a requirement for foreign language in every elementary school, found that recruiting personnel sufficient both in training and in numbers proved more problematic than had been envisaged. This has led to large class sizes and the use of teachers who are often less than ideally prepared for the job they are to do.

On the positive side, a stronger tradition of methodolgical innovation at elementary school level exists in the U.S. than in Europe. This creativity was evident both in the FLES programs of the '50s and '60s, and continued in the '70s and '80s with such developments as Total Physical Response (TPR). This methodology for teaching a second language to young learners, devised and popularised by James Asher (1996) in California, enjoys considerable support in the U.S. elementary system. By requiring physical rather than linguistic responses from the learner, TPR capitalizes on children's energy and love of movement. Further, the method claims to mimic how children learn their first language. Learners pass through a silent period, during which they build a 'comprehension base' while the language is becoming internalised.

The TPR method has been widely used with younger children but has also been shown to exhibit some serious limitations. It relies almost solely on imperative mood, to the exclusion of vast areas of the language, and focuses on short phrases or single-item vocabulary words. As a result, language learned via TPR alone never develops the narrative and descriptive modes needed for meaningful communication. In addition, TPR teachers and students eventually get tired of executing commands. In the light of this critique, recent years have seen the development of TPRS (Total Physical Response Storytelling). This methodology, developed in the past decade or so by Blaine Ray (1996), has

attained widespread popularity among teachers of foreign language in American elementary schools. It builds on the foundation of TPR, but adds the narrative mode, supplemented by a repertoire of visual aids that enable children to manipulate the story line and tell and retell it. TPRS is highly regarded in the United States, and its practitioners are in constant demand to offer workshops and presentations to elementary school teachers.

Only a minority of elementary schools offer programs that set proficiency in a language as a main goal. Most schools aim at various kinds of introductory exposure to the language. This is often set in the context of FLEX classes. Foreign Language Exploratory or Foreign Language Experience (FLEX) courses remain popular in the US, though a number of language teaching organizations have expressed doubts about their worth. FLEX curricula at particular schools are mostly put together by the teachers, often on an *ad hoc* basis. Generally, these programs aim to give students a foundation for foreign language study, equipping them with a rudimentary knowledge of how languages work, and imparting study skills that will be useful later in acquiring mastery of a specific language. They focus not so much on learning a language as on learning how to learn one. Some language study does go on in the FLEX classroom - often in the form of an introduction of basic elements of a number of languages, such as greetings, numbers, days of the week etc. The goal is to impart some consciousness of language itself and expose children to the fact that not everyone speaks English and that thoughts can be expressed in other languages. If the teacher has taken a little linguistics at college level, it would be common to see the course offering some treatment of non-human languages, be they animal communication or artificial systems such as Morse code or computer language. As the teacher of such a course does not need to be highly proficient in the languages she presents, it is not unusual for pupils to be introduced to rudiments of languages such as Japanese or Russian - the Cyrillic alphabet, for example - in addition to the more common choices. Black pupils may receive some exposure to an African language such as Swahili. There is invariably a strong cultural and interdisciplinary element in FLEX courses, with classes studying a little of the history, geography, cuisine, customs etc. of other societies, as well as finding out something of how languages have evolved and are related to and influence each other. The study of basic grammatical terms and concepts, useful for the future foreign language learner, may obviously also dovetail with what is going on in the English class. Additionally, these programs may help children decide which language they should later study in more depth. In this respect, they can aid recruitment for languages other than Spanish, as well as fostering language study generally.

FLEX courses have many adherents, but a significant proportion of language teachers decry them. They charge that students emerge from such courses with perhaps a smattering of a few words in a few languages, but with no usable proficiency in any, and little basis acquired for future learning. In their view, the time spent on FLEX could better be devoted to rigorous study of one particular language, study that would provide the foundation for rapid acquisition of proficiency when the child goes on to the high school.

High School and College

It would be fallacious to believe that foreign language education is today a central concern of the majority of Americans. Whenever national soul-searching about low educational standards is provoked by the release of studies which adversely compare American children's attainment to that of children in other countries, it is striking that it is maths or the sciences which are at issue, not foreign language proficiency. It bears comment that about over half of American high school students do not study any second language. A disproportionate element of these would be of lower socio-economic background, and/or black, and/or living in city centres or in small rural communities (Finn, 1998). American education traditionally offers more choice to students than is the case in Europe. One of the ways in which this is done is in the 'elective' - that is to say a course or subject which the student may freely choose to take or not. In many American high schools, foreign languages have up to now been

counted as electives; hence it is quite possible to graduate from a high school without ever having taken a language. Young people who have no ambitions to go on to college often follow this route.

Yet all fifty states include foreign languages in their curricula. Forty states have laws requiring that public school students have at least two years of foreign language study available to them, usually on the secondary level. Ten states require that college-bound or advanced/honors secondary students study a foreign language. Numbers for foreign languages in the high school have stayed relatively stable in recent years. The percentage of secondary schools teaching foreign language has changed little - 87% in 1987 and 86% in 1997. Over seven million high school students (out of 13.5 million) are studying foreign languages, though as in other instances what precisely is meant by studying - how many hours per week, for how many years - is not uniform. Students at private schools are more likely to take foreign language than those at public, girls more than boys and for longer (Draper & Hicks, 1996). Spanish is offered in almost every secondary school that has a foreign language program. Japanese grew in popularity a few years ago but may have reached a plateau, while other languages are either marking time or slipping back.

Study of a foreign language is an admission requirement at 26% of the colleges and universities in the U.S. For graduation, almost 35% of the institutions require language study for all students; over 40%, for some students (Huber, 1992). Yet despite the fact that there are a lot of young people studying foreign languages, the number who specialise in the subject is small. For instance, in 1991-92 among the 1.5 million degrees conferred at all levels, only 18,000, or slightly more than 1%, went to specialists in foreign languages and literature. In high school Spanish, nearly one in three students do not continue their first year's study of the language into another year. This becomes almost two out of three who did not continue from second year Spanish to third year. Ninety per cent of students discontinue Spanish before they reach the fourth year, the stage at which they might be expected to be acquiring worthwhile proficiency in the language (Schwartz, 1985; Brod and Huber, 1992; Barnwell, 1992). The American education system presents a picture of attrition to the point of wastage - given the large numbers of students who take languages in high school and college, the end result is poor in terms of numbers of language majors or proficiency among majors or non-majors.

Generally, language learning is almost entirely seen in the U.S. as an activity of the traditional academy - school or college. Apart from the biggest cities, there are few private businesses offering language tuition on a commercial or specialist basis - little or no Berlitz. This even applies in the case of English as a Second Language - there is no counterpart of the myriad English language schools that one sees in Britain and increasingly in Ireland. Many thousands of people come to the United States every year to study English, but they do so within the framework of colleges and universities rather than private academies.

Articulation of foreign language instruction from one level to another is quite inefficient in the United States. There is no standardised, nationally-mandated measure of language proficiency for secondary schools. Instruments and methods vary among states, institutions and even among teachers in the same school. The CAL survey showed that it is common to place children who studied a language at elementary schools in the very same classroom in high school (Beginners' Level I) right alongside children who have no prior knowledge of the language. This also often occurs at college level. Students, who in many cases must have studied a foreign language in order to be admitted to the university or college, still enrol for a Beginners class. It is a commonplace that many people spend their entire educational sequence taking and retaking Elementary Spanish. In this respect there has been little progress, for as early as the 1920s foreign language teachers were making the same complaint (Wood, 1927).

Evaluation is for the most part a matter of relatively informal achievement testing on the part of teachers of individual classes. The teacher determines the letter grade for each

student based on a combination of attendance, performance in class, and scores on teacher-generated quizzes and tests. According to the CAL survey, the top three assessments, in order of use, are selected-response tests (multiple choice, matching, etc.), short-answer tests, and students' presentations or demonstrations. Class participation is given a heavy weighting, as is homework. There is less stress on performance on one specific major exam than has been the case in Europe. Private enterprise dominates the US testing field in a way unknown elsewhere: college-bound students may choose from a number of standardised tests, such as the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) in French, German, and Spanish, the Scholastic Achievement Tests and the Advanced Placement tests. Apart from these American tests, a number of schools, especially those at higher socio-economic levels, have begun to prepare students for the International Baccalaureate, an examination system originally developed in Switzerland but now gaining ground in the US.

All of these tests are voluntary on the part of the student. They are usually taken in the final year of high school, scores being forwarded to the colleges/universities to which a student is applying. High scores can enhance students' chances for acceptance, or have the effect of exempting them from the one or two years of basic study of the language in college that is commonly obligatory. Such exemptions, though common, are not altogether healthy for foreign languages, since they mean that students who have attained a very good degree of proficiency in the high school often discontinue its study at college level. Some colleges seek to deal with this by requiring that students who have scored high on the high school exit foreign language exams take further upper-level classes on the college level.

In order to go beyond accepting 'seat time' as sufficient for the awarding of credit (the number of years one has studied a language, regardless of attainment) some states have established oral proficiency requirements for students at various grade levels or for graduation from high school. Oregon, for example, has mandated attainment of a minimum of Intermediate Low on the ACTFL/ETS scale as a requirement for a high school diploma. A growing trend in secondary schools is the use of alternative assessments in the foreign language classroom. These evaluations often include student self-assessments and portfolios. The latter 'may contain a rich array of samples, including videos of class presentations and role-playing, audio excerpts of formal and informal interviews, drafts and final versions of written work, photographs and other descriptions of projects' (College Board 1996, 37). However, the spread of such evaluations is likely to be hindered by the fact that they are unwieldy and require a large investment in time and other resources.

Methodology

An issue which has aroused a good deal of controversy in recent years is that of block scheduling. Traditionally, schooling had been measured in what was known as the Carnegie Unit, equivalent to an academic hour (50 minutes, for practical purposes) per week of class contact. Educational institutions stipulated the minimum number of such units necessary for courses to be counted for credit. In the past few years, schools have begun to experiment with block scheduling, that is, a timetable which enrols students in fewer classes each day, but in classes of longer duration. While several models exist, they have in common the desire to permit subject areas to be taught and learned in greater depth than is often possible with the traditional 50-minute class. For example, a student's timetable might comprise four 90-minute classes a day, five days a week. In such a case courses hitherto year-long now only run for half a year. This permits an increase in the number of courses that students can take during their four years of high school, since six courses per year is the norm within the traditional system. Further, since the course is now offered twice a year, student demand can be more easily satisfied and class size kept down. Advocates of block scheduling maintain that it offers a means of individualising instruction and fostering interdisciplinary methods and innovative teaching. On the whole, however, support for block scheduling appears quite tepid among language teachers, who express concern that a couple of absences in a block-scheduled course can cause a student to fatally fall behind in the language class.

As in Europe, almost all American secondary school programs include listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the foreign language instructional sequence. There is probably more overt attention to culture, especially in the 'small c' sense, in the US than in European schools. The 1997 CAL survey found a trend towards more oral work in the classroom. 22% of responding secondary schools reported that their language teachers use foreign language in the classroom most of the time (75% to 100%), vs. 18% in 1987. At the secondary school level, the three most common instructional materials used by schools with foreign language programs continued to be audiovisual materials, commercially-published textbooks/workbooks and teacher-made materials. The percentage of secondary schools that used these types of materials increased significantly since 1987. Authentic materials - taken directly from the target culture - are also used quite frequently, though provision remains informal, such as what a teacher brings back from a holiday abroad. The notion of 'proficiency', as articulated in the ACTFL Guidelines (1986) dominates thinking about language instruction, at high school at any rate. By far the most widely-used text in the preparation of future language teachers is Alice Omaggio's *Teaching Language in Context* (Omaggio-Hadley, 1993), a book which stands firmly within the proficiency paradigm. Often statewide commissions or adoption committees decide which textbooks to adopt, teachers being given a choice of texts from which to choose. At the larger language teachers' conventions, hundreds of exhibitors may seek to attract the interest of those seeking materials for classroom use. The competition between publishers is quite keen, and hence there is a wide range of materials available for the most commonly taught languages. Almost all texts claim to follow a communicative approach, however defined. Audio and video tapes usually accompany a basic textbook, though the latter remain expensive.

Many publishers offer ancillary materials, such as teachers' kits or CALL programs. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics survey, computer-based instructional materials are now used by over half of the secondary schools with foreign language programs. The integration of the computer into the foreign language classroom had faltered a little in the early 1990s, since the pedagogical quality of so much on offer was poor, but it has recieved a fillip with the advent of the internet (Walz, 1998). Most schools now are scrambling to update their computer capabilities, and the investment in technology and hardware is the greatest since the big boom in the building of language laboratories in the '60s and early '70s. As a caveat, it may be pointed out that no evidence was ever produced that the language laboratory, so heavily invested in thirty years ago, increased proficiency standards. It is perhaps too early to look for such evidence in the case of computers, but many veterans of the 1960s rather cynically expect a similar outcome. As one source puts it - very much a friend of computer-assisted instruction - advocates tend to focus on what students could do with the computer, rather than on what they actually do (Schwartz, 1995). As so often in the past, the challenge of the next few years will be to marry methodology and technology.

Within the past year or two considerations of foreign language pedagogy have been highly influenced by the 'National Standards'. One of the principal goals of the Goals 2000 Act, passed by Congress in 1994, was 'to promote the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and certifications'. Acting on this directive, professional bodies concerned with specific academic disciplines drew up national standards for instruction and learning. In the case of foreign languages, the major language teaching professional organisations in the US collaborated in the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, and their labor bore fruit in the shape of the National Standards document of 1996. This presents the following goals, organised around five main themes: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. Students should:

- Communicate in languages other than English.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

- Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.
- Develop insight into own language and culture.
- Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world.

The Standards are quite rich in the view they take of language learning - they certainly go much further than the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, which focused exclusively on language used in 'communication', mostly conceived of as face-to-face verbal exchanges. There is now much encouragement of content-based language learning, or teaching across the curriculum, as it is often called in the US (Moeller, 1994). In many cases the National Standards exist side-by-side with state and local curriculum frameworks and performance Standards. While they do not set out a curriculum, they furnish a way of conceptualising foreign language education, and can help the teacher reflect on what s/he is doing and communicate with students, parents, and administrators about what is happening in the classroom and why. Awareness of the National Standards is high among language teachers at elementary and secondary levels in the US. It is virtually impossible to attend a foreign languages teachers' conference which does not offer a session on the Standards.
Some English-speaking parents, generally at higher socio-economic levels, are opting to enroll their children in immersion education, 'in which part, or in some cases, all of the instruction will be carried out in a language other than English' (Fortune & Jorstad, 1996: 163). In 1995, there were 187 such immersion schools, across 26 states. Languages of instruction include Spanish (most common), Arabic, French, German, Hawaiian, Japanese and Mandarin. But it remains rare for anglophone parents to enrol their children in bilingual classes, and the system does not encourage it. In addition to these programs, there are hundreds of mother tongue classes and schools which teach 'ethnic' languages to children and adults. These privately-funded schools aim to maintain the group's language and culture. They often meet only one day a week, on Saturday or Sunday, and are supported by community or church groups. This is a comparatively unstudied area of language learning in the US, though in 1979 Joshua Fishman reported that there were over 5000 such schools and classes, teaching a diverse body of languages - from Hebrew to Irish.

Teachers

In 1990 there were at least 80,000 language teachers in the United States. In secondary schools, most of the language teachers are teachers of Spanish, about 4% of all teachers in secondary schools. Native speakers account for about 40% of the Spanish and Japanese teachers, but much smaller percentages for the other languages. Secondary school foreign language teachers are more highly certified than their elementary school counterparts. Eighty-two percent of high schools report that their foreign language teachers are certified to teach foreign languages at the secondary level, while only 9% of the responding elementary schools claimed that their teachers were appropriately certified. These results reflect the lack of available teacher training and certification programs geared toward the elementary foreign language teacher. In addition, many states do not yet require licensure or endorsement for elementary school foreign language teachers. As teacher certification, licensure, and credentialing is done on a state by state basis, there is a great variety of requirements across the U.S. and it is difficult to present a coherent national picture. All teachers in U.S. public schools are required by law to be certified, holding both academic (foreign language subject matter specialty) and professional (pedagogical) qualifications. Independent (private) schools differ in their requirements for teachers but increasingly they are calling for similar qualifications.

More and more states are demanding a graduate level degree to obtain teaching certification. This is in reaction to a criticism often articulated, that teachers in the US take too few courses in their subject specialty, and too many in pedagogy and psychology. Requiring a Masters will encourage trainee teachers to take more subject matter courses in their major. The same goal underpins the trend towards elimination of the undergraduate major in education - more and more those who hope to become teachers must pursue a regular

academic major in the discipline which they aspire to teach, essentially the same as in the Irish secondary teaching model. In the case of foreign language, these changes should raise teachers' language proficiency, by allowing them to enrol in more language courses than would be possible if they were taking all their education courses along with their language courses.

The American system encourages, indeed sometimes obliges teachers to upgrade their credentials and skills. Most states reward further study, be it in the US or abroad, and attendance at professional conferences and workshops. Obviously only a small minority of teachers can escape family commitments and study abroad. Those who stay home look to state and federal government funding for such things as summer institutes for teachers or materials and methodology workshops. Staff development and in-service teacher training has increased significantly in the past decade. In general, opportunities for upgrading teaching skills seem to be more readily available than those for upgrading language skills. In 1997, over two-thirds of elementary schools that offer foreign language classes reported that their language teachers had participated in staff development or in-service training. At the secondary level, over three quarters of schools with foreign language programs reported that their teachers attended staff development or in-service training.

Mention was made earlier of the bureacracy often faced by teachers who move from state to state. The system does not encourage teachers to gain a variety of experiences. Indeed a teacher who had lived four or five years in a country whose language (s)he now aspires to teach would get little salary or credentials recognition of this from a state teaching agency. On the plus side, however, most states build incentives for further study into their personnel system, for example by encouraging teachers to attend in-service courses or pursue higher degrees. Teacher conferences and teachers' professional bodies (not related to trade union activity) have a much higher profile in the US than in Europe. Most teachers in most states are not unionised.

While it varies from place to place in line with local cost of living, on average a newly-qualified teacher can expect a starting salary in the middle 20s (dollars).

All evidence points to an increasingly veteran teaching force in U.S. schools. A significant number of language teachers will retire in the next twenty years. With the number of people entering the foreign language teaching field not equaling the demand, the departure rate may already exceed that of replacement. Traditionally in an expanding economy, recruitment to teaching has suffered, as university students had a range of career options before them. The American economy has been strong for many years now, with the consequent effect on teacher recruitment. (Draper, 1989) The teacher shortage is being addressed at the state or regional level through alternative routes to certification, recruitment incentives, and technology support, and at the local level through changes in student schedules to fit the available teachers. The shortage has reached such an acute state that it is now not unheard of for language teachers to be offered a 'signing-on fee' or bonus. Other incentives include student loan forgiveness programs, tuition reimbursement, scholarships etc.

Some states recruit teachers from abroad, especially teachers of Spanish. While no formal study appears to have been carried out on this, there is anecdotal evidence that such programs have not always been successful, as the foreign teachers found it difficult to adjust to the culture of the US educational system (Archibold, 1998). In addition, it has proven very difficult for foreign-educated teachers to negotiate the bureacracy that often characterizes teacher credentialing in the United States. It is especially difficult for citizens of other countries (or the USA) to get teaching credentials if their undergraduate course work was completed abroad. Those wishing to do so must negotiate a nightmarish bureacracy, involving such things as certified translations of their credentials, descriptions (that must be provided in English, in certified translation) of the courses they took at university, etc.

Instead of hiring new teachers, many school districts seek to solve the problem by directing students away from languages in which there is a teacher shortage and/or asking teachers to teach languages other than those in which they are qualified. This is quite a pressing issue, given indications as to the language proficiency of teachers in the United States. Though Carroll's groundbreaking study on the topic is now seen as flawed (Barnwell, 1996: 152) few would challenge the essential finding, that the foreign language proficiency of most language majors and many US language teachers is unacceptably low. If teachers are less than adequate in the foreign language they mainly teach, one can speculate on how ill-equipped they may be to teach a language in which they are even less prepared. Another solution lies in distance learning, be it to cater for the demand for Spanish or to provide an economically viable means of teaching minority langauges such as Russian or Japanese. Such courses have a long tradition in the United States - as early as the 1920s and 30s radio stations were offering language courses. Communication between teacher and students, and among students, can now be achieved through such means as video-conferencing, satellite and computer networks (Glisan, 1998).

Dominance of Spanish

Though the language was spoken in what is now the west or southwest of the United States long before the advent of English, the predominance of Spanish in the language classroom is a fairly recent phenomenon. Throughout the nineteenth century, and as late as the First World War, German was the most commonly taught modern language in the United States. However, the anti-German attitudes that sprang up or in many cases were cultivated during the War cast the language into a chasm from which it never emerged. Before the war about 25% of all public school students had been taking German. By 1922 the figure had dropped to 1% (Barnwell, 1996). The 1920s and '30s saw French pre-eminent, though with the beginnings of interest in the teaching of Spanish. Latin was still far more widely taught than any modern language during these decades, and of course most high school students still did not study any foreign language. World War II and its sequel proved damaging to enrolments in Latin, and the language became restricted to a tiny minority of schools. As to the modern languages, by the 1960s French and Spanish were about even, each language averaging a little more than 10% of all high school students. Since the 1970s, however, there has been a clear shift towards Spanish in schools and colleges throughout the country, with the result that today Spanish is by far the most commonly taught second language in the United States. At the primary level, over 6% of children study foreign languages, with Spanish leading the list at 4.5% followed by French with 1.5%, and German and Japanese each with 0.2% of enrolments. Spanish is the most popular at secondary level, studied by about 28% of all secondary school students, followed by French with 11%, and German with 3%. Less commonly taught languages, such as Russian and Japanese, have their adherents, particularly in specialist schools, but statistically barely reach proportions big enough to be counted. The imbalance might be even greater were it not for the fact that students who seek to take Spanish are often shunted towards taking another language instead. At university the balance may not be quite as uneven, but there is no doubt that Spanish hegemony is unchallenged here too.

A separate essay would be required to fully explore reasons for the popularity of Spanish relative to all other second/foreign languages. The first European language to be spoken in North America, Spanish has clawed back a little of the dominance it enjoyed up to a century and a half ago, when it was the primary means of communication over much of what is now the US West and SouthWest. Indeed, Spanish can hardly be truly termed a 'foreign' language in the US, and Latin America no longer ends at the Rio Grande. Among the non-Hispanic population, what one author terms 'an American Urban Legend' (Friedrich, 1997) reflects a stereotype that Spanish is somehow 'easier' to learn than other languages. This assumption has recently been challenged in several places, including - somewhat ironically - by the American Association of Teachers of French. However, the strength of the stereoype in popular culture has hardly been shaken. The situation might appear healthy for Spanish, but

it has brought its own drawbacks, ranging from the difficulty of finding qualified Spanish teachers to the problem of large class size. Indeed the hegemony of Spanish even causes concern among teachers of the language. A group of colleges in Massachusetts held a conference on the topic in September 1999, under the title 'The Future of Spanish Departments on College Campuses'. They were concerned that vast enrolments in lower level Spanish would change the Spanish department's role from that of focus for enquiry into literary and cultural issues to that of production line provider of countless elementary and intermediate language courses.

Estimates for the number of native speakers of Spanish in the US are unreliable, and probably underreported. However, it seems clear that at a minimum, the figure exceeds 20 million or some 8% of the population. California, Texas, and New York have the highest numbers, but there is now no state, from Alabama to Alaska, which does not have a sizeable Hispanic population (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1994). Spanish language media have 50 TV channels, over 800 radio stations, and at least 36 newspapers of significant circulation. Yet, despite the language's strength, provision for teaching Spanish to children of Spanish-speaking parents has been patchy. Most states are reluctant to encourage bilingual education, and even where such a thing exists it often is bilingual only in name, being better characterised as an effort to help immigrant children learn English so that they can do regular schoolwork with their English-speaking classmates and receive an equal educational opportunity. There have also been pedagogical problems in fashioning teaching approaches to serve the very heterogenous population of Hispanic students. Many such students are completely fluent in Spanish, and received some of their earlier education through that language before coming to the United States. Others exhibit good listening comprehension but much inferior speaking ability and no range of registers in Spanish. Another significant minority of 'Hispanics' are Hispanic only in name, and come from monolingual anglophone households.

Immigration to the United States has always been characterized by a fairly rapid adoption of English and a concomitant loss of proficiency in the language(s) of the immigrant group. In the case of Spanish, this process has been offset by the continued influx of large numbers of Spanish speakers each year, but there are grounds for believing that the language is not being transmitted intergenerationally in the US. Reports from Florida indicate that teachers of Spanish now have to be recruited from out of state, many of them people of non-Hispanic or anglophone background. Hispanic students with names like Ramirez and Gonzalez are thus being taught Spanish by teachers with names like Kelly or Hoffman (Ariza, 1998). Further, it is by no means evident that all, or even a majority, of Hispanic parents want their children to receive 'bilingual' education, however defined. A significant part of the 60% majority which passed Proposition 227 in California, effectively ending that state's bilingual education program, appear to have been Hispanic. There are also variations within the Hispanic population of the U.S., with Puerto Rican parents being most favourably disposed towards a strong element of Spanish language in their children's schooling, Cuban parents being inclined to stress rapid acquisition of English.

Bilingualism is rarely a two-way street in the U.S. In other words, though speakers of other languages learn to use English, few people from the English-speaking culture reciprocate. Apart from teachers of Spanish, it would be very rare for people of English-speaking heritage to carry out any extended social or professional transactions through the medium of Spanish. Only two of the fifty states recognise official languages in addition to English: New Mexico (Spanish) and Hawaii (Hawaiian). In fact there have been many efforts to copperfasten the position of English. A number of states have passed resolutions or statutes declaring English the official language. In 1988 Arizona passed an amendment making English the official language, but in 1990 a federal judge invalidated it as an infringement of the rights to free speech under the Constitution. Adherents of a group known as U.S. English believe that this should be declared the official language of the

country, and call for the prohibition of the use of other languages in public situations such as voting or doing business with state or federal governments. Bills to declare English the official language of the nation have been proposed from time to time in Congress, but so far none of these has been put up for full voting by both houses. The cause of bilingualism has not been helped by heavy-handed federal interventions, such as requirements that anglophone teachers attend bilingual sensitivity training if they are to keep their jobs (Crawford, 1992).

Conclusion

A consideration of the place of languages in American education throws into relief some questions currently faced in Ireland. The overbearing position of Spanish has come about in the absence of any national policy to foster diversity among the languages on offer to American students. Though no one disputes the status of Spanish in terms of history, culture and numbers of speakers, there is now a growing realisation that efforts must be made to see that it does not squeeze out other important languages from the system. This parallels the increased consciousness in Ireland that French's hegemony in the schools is unhealthy for the country's needs, for the growth of other languages, and perhaps even for the good of French itself. The cases of Spanish in the U.S. and French in Ireland show that an interventionist role from educational planners and administrators is sometimes required to make sure that diversity of language choice may flourish, though Spanish also exemplifies how difficult it is to slow down a language's momentum once it becomes identified in the public mind as the one to be taught and studied. The history of technology in the U.S. foreign language classroom prompts the belief that innovation in this area alone is not enough to raise achievement levels, a point to be borne in mind as Irish schools continue to acquire computer capability. One more of many instructive lessons may be drawn from the case of languages in the elementary schools. The American experience shows that however laudable is the goal of providing a second language to young children, numerous practical difficulties are posed in terms of supply of teachers and materials, definition of objectives, as well as articulation from the elementary sequence onwards. If we hope to find a permanent place for foreign language in the Irish primary school, we will benefit from study of how the United States has faced and sometimes solved these problems.

Notes

[1] The Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington DC (CAL) conducted a large scale survey of elementary and secondary schools in 1997 with a view to gathering information about current patterns in language enrollment, developments in curriculum and teaching methodologies, and trends in teacher qualifications and training (Branaman and Rhodes 1998). Unless otherwise specified, the statistical information cited here comes from the CAL survey.

[2] In fact the work of the present Secretary, Richard Riley was deemed so important that he was ruled out of consideration for the position of Ambassador to Ireland in order to permit him to remain in Washington.

[3] All of these agencies operate web sites e.g. Defense Language Institute http://www.dli.army.mil/ Central Intelligence Agency http://www.call.gov

[4] Sample web sites may be viewed at Ohio State University http://www.colums.ohio-state.edu/flc/ and http://www.educ.iastate.edu/nflrc/ (Iowa State University).

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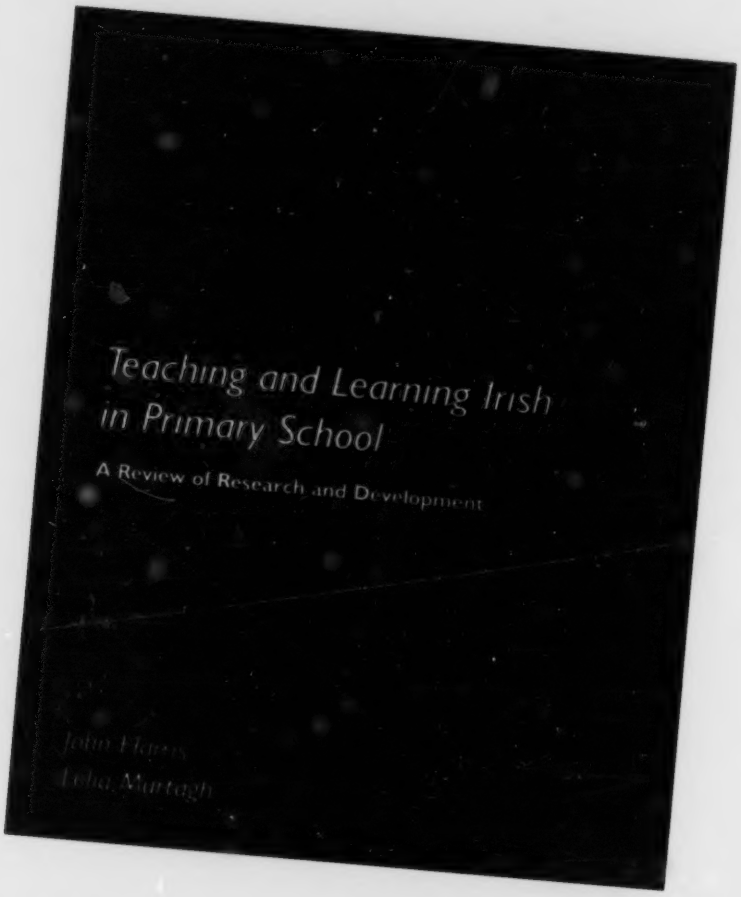

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Teleservices Languages or Language: A Personal Perspective

Edward Bressan
130 Westland Square
Sandwith Street Lower
Dublin 2

Abstract
This paper outlines some of the factors contributing to the skills shortage in the teleservices industry and offers some solutions to the problem. It stems from a discovery that the industry is having major difficulties finding suitably qualified foreign language speakers in most languages, and despite some efforts to redress the deficit, the education system does not accord with commercial reality. Drawing on a personal experience using Italian in a call-centre, the article then analyses the linguistic requirements of the position and offers some suggestions for syllabi which aim to prepare students for a teleservices position in any language.

Section 1
Overview of the Teleservices Industry in Ireland

Background
The reality of the teleservices industry with the growing number of call centres located in Ireland has provided an interesting challenge to both staff recruitment consultants and language educators. Recruitment consultants are desperately looking for 'multilingual' staff on a round the clock basis while language educators are in a quandary over how to train an adequate number of staff to fill the positions. This has spawned a large number of language courses geared towards the industry and a re-appraisal of some of the outdated aspects of the Irish education system.

The trend is set to increase further as multinational companies take advantage of economic incentives by relocating to Ireland. These include generous government IDA grants, a low corporate taxation rate and a flexible, low-wage workforce *inter alia*. Moreover, the telecommunications revolution has already created a truly global cyberspace where national boundaries are non-existent. Customer transactions in industries from banking to electricity to computer sales are increasingly performed exclusively by telephone and the call centre can be located in any country with a reliable telephone network. Nowadays, it is not unusual if an Italian banking customer speaks to say, an Irish customer service representative based in Dublin by dialling a local Milan number. The service centre is physically in Dublin but virtually in Italy.

Consequently, a number of multinational companies (UPS, Citibank, Oracle etc.) has re-based their European shared services centres in Ireland, and customers seeking access to these services will speak to an agent in Dublin.

In general, customers are said to prefer speaking to somebody from their own country in their own language and feel disconcerted when they dial a local number and are connected to a foreigner. Therefore, companies are keen to employ native speakers of the various languages as well as locals who are said to have 'near-native' command of a continental language.

Problems Finding Suitable Staff
Herein lies the difficulty. Ireland's peripheral status has not favoured a strong language learning tradition of foreign languages and the country is usually ranked bottom in EU league tables comparing foreign language provision in education systems. Until recently, the bias towards French in most secondary schools has prevented generations from being given the

opportunity to learn other major world languages and it is rare for secondary students to study two modern languages up to leaving certificate level.

Meanwhile, it is not possible to rely on Europeans to come over to Ireland and fill the positions for a number of reasons. Europeans do not migrate readily and those that do only stay a relatively short time. While Ireland can currently attract some staff from some of the major continental countries with high unemployment rates, it is not a sustainable solution. Irish wages are low, the cost of living is high and the current accommodation crisis is deterring many people from putting down roots here. As a result, the majority of 'multilingual' staff who are available to work are young graduates from the continent who are anxious to have some work experience before moving on, and their Irish counterparts who have studied languages at university or college.

However, it is difficult to retain graduates in these positions as the salaries tend to be at the lower end and the career prospects are limited. The reason for this is that the Irish government is encouraging companies to locate a particular function in Ireland where the staff services a particular need. In banking it could be billing or customer service; in computers it could be after sales service and technical support. Essentially, the Irish role is that of the back-office which supports and services the main functions of the company, (sales, marketing) taking place elsewhere. The highly skilled positions tend not to move to Ireland and those that do would require that the employees had extra technical expertise in an area such as accounting or computer programming.

In addition the telephone positions are repetitive and monotonous. More often than not, the positions were previously held by non-graduates before 'being migrated' to Ireland. Staff are trained in performing a specific telephone role and do not generally acquire key knowledge or skills which would permit inter-company transfers, as the back-office is hived-off from the central nucleus. Interestingly, the industry is currently characterised by a high staff turnover rate and a continual recruitment drive. At a time when employment is set to expand to more than 10,000 over the coming years, the industry is actively seeking more trained staff.

Addressing the Problems

Logically and necessarily, therefore, recruitment efforts have focused on attracting less ambitious and less qualified staff who have the requisite foreign language skills for the job. Currently, a number of courses at certificate and diploma level offer preparation for the teleservices industry such as the National Certificate in Humanities (Applied Languages) at Tallaght. Moreover, in recognition of the need to train local staff for the industry, by providing training and accelerated industry feeder courses to adults, the Department of Education's curriculum development unit has established new specialised post-leaving certificate two-year courses in teleservices which offer a few hundred places at various locations around the country.

The issue was previously addressed in issue number 37 of this journal and the teleservices support structure now offers two year courses geared towards the industry which include periods of residence in one of the four countries (France, Germany, Spain, Italy) as well as intensive language training in the linguistic and behavioural needs of the industry (McGee, 1998).

Speaking the Right Language

However, post-Leaving Certificate courses require successful completion of the Leaving Certificate in the chosen language as a prerequisite and the only languages on offer mirror the sparse availability at Leaving Certificate level (English, French, German, Spanish and Italian). Needless to say, there is an acute shortage of speakers of Dutch, Portuguese, Swedish and Norwegian and in reality a small pool of fluent Italian speakers in Ireland.

Yet speakers of these languages are in high demand in the teleservices industry and are very difficult to find. In the case of Italian, the scarcity of locally trained language personnel is compounded by the fact that it is difficult to recruit Italian nationals who speak fluent

English. Currently adverts in the newspapers invite people who are fluent in English to apply.

Furthermore, the 'disastrous and deteriorating' position of Italian in the Irish education system, where students are expected to come from, originally outlined 12 years ago in this journal (Ó Cuilleanáin, 1987) has not substantially improved. Low enrolments, inadequate provision of courses and indifferent attitudes towards the subject were cited as principal contributing factors. The fact that only 16 schools offer Italian in 1999 along with Department of Education enrolment figures indicating only a marginal increase in students sitting for Italian in the Leaving Certificate confirms the lack of improvement (1998 Leaving Certificate figures as follows: French: 77980, German: 23001, Spanish: 3512, Italian: 399).

This runs at complete odds with government policy on inward investment and in particular, the designation of Ireland as a suitable location for back-offices of major corporations. While the IDA is prepared to offer large amounts of taxpayers' money to move jobs from the continent to Ireland, the Department of Education has not adapted by training a linguistically proficient workforce to actually take up these jobs. It is just hoped that they don't start wooing Asian companies promising the usual blarney of a highly educated workforce able to speak fluent Cantonese.

Solutions

Fortunately, the problem has been recognised at government level and significantly at industry level. Firstly, the state education system is now focusing on providing tertiary courses geared towards the industry. This will hopefully be accompanied by an enlarged offering of languages from primary school onwards. Already a number of government-funded initiatives are looking seriously at previously neglected languages such as Dutch, and Japanese is now offered at university level.

There is also evidence that the private sector is willing to take up the slack. Language schools that offer training for business have mushroomed and offer English language tuition to European call-centre staff. Other schools work in concert with particular businesses and provide tailor-made language courses for staff who need additional language training, often in English, to perform their jobs adequately. They would involve addressing the requirements of the job closely and would be based on the premise that the key to good telephone communication is precision rather than eloquence and that the language requirements of the industry are specialised and technical.

Another more pressing need is to consider expanding the availability of foreign languages at university level and then begin to introduce them at secondary schools. Such a policy was put into place in the State of Victoria, Australia, in the early 1990s where there was a widespread realisation that the languages offered at schools (French etc.) were no longer relevant to the needs of the workplace and that the education system should focus on the more relevant Asian languages. A budget was set aside to retrain French teachers in Indonesian and Japanese using multimedia and some teachers were not far ahead of their students. This was complemented by the infusion of native speaker teachers who came over on one-year exchange contracts. Both students and teachers were given intensive language training.

The same process can be applied to what are currently post-Leaving Certificate courses and entry prerequisites can be relaxed to include students who have proved their ability in one language. With extra tuition it is relatively easy to advance quickly in a second L2. Moreover, before assuming that quick-fix solutions do not work, it is worth taking a look in detail at the actual language requirements of a typical customer services position in the teleservices industry. In this section, I would like to offer a personal perspective on language needs in the call centre industry based on my experiences working in the Milan section of a large Italian bank in Dublin. First of all I will outline the nature of the job and then outline the salient linguistic requirements.

Section 2
On the Job

Logging In
A customer calls a local number in Milan and the call is diverted to Dublin which is one hour behind. The call passes through an internal switchboard in the Dublin network until an operator who has switched their headphones on and is therefore 'available' picks it up. If that operator is 'unavailable', the call will bounce to the next person in the queue who is available. Upon hearing the signal, this person will greet the customer in the language of their country of origin as if they were in that country.

Language Requirements
The typical phone call in a call centre does not last more than two minutes and is very specific in nature. The aim is to provide an accurate and efficient response to an enquiry or to solicit information related to an enquiry. The phone operator is playing a particular role and will use a manner and language (formulaic expressions) which would often need to be learned in their L1. These expressions, however, once acquired, rarely change and as the job becomes more familiar, they become second nature.

Yet accuracy is paramount and while the range of linguistic devices used is limited, they must be manipulated perfectly. As soon as a hint of uncertainty sets in, customers start to panic. For example, an Italian customer requesting his bank balance expects complete precision. A non-native speaker needs to be especially confident when pronouncing the numbers and accurate when indicating whether it is a debit or credit balance.

However, requesting account balance information does not involve a further conversation and the phone call finishes quickly. The following typical sequence of events would take place.

a. Greeting
b. Nature of request
c. Response to query
d. Greeting to close the conversation

In the above example a limited number of words are exchanged and the language training for this type of activity would focus on being able to master a limited range of key structures ('good morning'), lexical items ('your current balance is…') and behaviours ('just one moment please').

While the above phone call may be typical, others can be more detailed. For example, the operator is often asked to spell their name (using conventional cities ('ci come Como'). At this stage the caller should have realised that their interlocutor is a non-native and may need a name as a contact reference. Unless one is lucky enough to be called Kennedy or Clinton, it usually requires being able to spell the Italian way. Once this is mastered, it is possible to have a name such as Mac Giollarnath, which may not always be pronounced properly.

Another requirement in banking is the ability to dictate numbers clearly and confidently. This can be especially tricky in Italian as the lira is still in circulation and runs into billions. It pays to be able to use numbers with ease in these business situations. From a pedagogical point of view, it is imperative to ensure that language students are more conversant with the use of numbers in a foreign language. Games and activities involving, for example, committees allocating budgets, should be a regular part of a curriculum. It was interesting to note that most language graduates were deficient in this respect.

Telesales staff are also often asked to justify a situation ('Why was the money not credited yesterday?'). They need to be able to deliver explanations for actions or at least promises of further action ('look, I'll have to get back to you on this one'). With a little time, these answers can become more routine and straightforward.

Other phone calls involve a request to be transferred to a third party and once again, a few key expressions need to be acquired in order to communicate effectively. A brief explanation such as 'Guardi, La Signora X e' fuori ufficcio. Le dispiacerebbe richiamrla piu' tardi?' ('em,

Mrs X has stepped out of the office, do you mind calling her back later?) would be adequate to deal with this situation. The focus is on maintaining levels of confidence and formality consonant with a professional operator.

Cultural Factors

Of equal importance, though, would be the cultural/pragmatic dimension of the interaction. Italian business transactions are polite and formal. Sensitivity to hierarchies, titles and age still do count and these are all expressed in the language, e.g. 'Senta, Dottor Biondi, mi potrebbe, gentilmente dare il Suo telefono'. ('Could I have your phone number please, Doctor Biondi?')

Using the formal address does not prohibit friendliness on the phone. The lack of face-to-face contact creates a different type of relationship and for regular customers a 'rapporto di fiducia'. Interestingly, while close business relationships develop over years, surveys which I conducted while in Milan suggest that the more intimate 'tu' form is still reserved for young people in a business context. In Italian, a further complication is when the imperative mood is used ('Mi lasci, cortesemente, il Suo telefono') and manipulation of this form requires constant practice.

Familiarity with particular institutions of the target language country is expected when dealing with customers over the phone. As the caller is ringing a local number in their own country, it is assumed that they are speaking to somebody in Italy. Therefore, they should be fully aware of the postcode/telephone system and other major institutions.
In short, awareness of institutions, sensitivity to cultural differences and mastery of key structures in the target language are the key ingredients of successful telephone exchanges. We will now turn to some pedagogic suggestions which would include them in the syllabus.

The Syllabus

One of the principal concerns of all LSP syllabus designers is what language level is appropriate for students to enter the course. In other words, how much general background Italian should a student know before commencing specialised training? As already stated, the Education Department's foreign language courses ask for successful completion of the Leaving Certificate for entry to their courses. Other benchmarks such as the Council of Europe's standards and Cambridge proficiency tests are often used as measures for entry into specialised courses.

However, the key seems to lie in the complexity of the task and functional fluency is a relative concept. At the call centre where I worked colleagues had a wide range of language experiences, ranging from intermediate to fluent but none had the specialised telephone language which was needed. When asked in a questionnaire (see note 3) about their confidence in Italian on the telephone, the over-riding response was that they had difficulties understanding the technical language of the industry, but once that was acquired through training, they were able to focus on listening to key words. Proficiency at entry level was less important than the ability to manipulate the language required for the job. This was consolidated subsequently through additional knowledge of the systems and procedures of the job.

This would suggest that the best approach to provide relevant materials is listening to live conversations of telephone operators. One of the features of call centres is that all phone calls are now recorded by the companies for 'security' reasons. These authentic recordings of telephone conversations, if obtained, are an invaluable teaching resource which can be analysed at a discoursal level in order to uncover methods of interaction including turn-taking strategies, adjacency pairs and transactional markers. They can also be analysed at a clausal level to highlight the differences between spoken and written language.

To sum up, a task-based syllabus which encompasses key linguistic and cultural areas relating to the position can provide the necessary skills. The availability of recordings as well as visits and perhaps work experience in companies already present provide adequate material to draw up a syllabus. A small number

of key linguistic and behavioural objectives are then highlighted and mastered so that functional fluency can be achieved.

Offering Tailor-Made Courses to the Companies

My experience of working for the bank suggests that in order to operate appropriately on the telephone, it is imperative to learn banking jargon as it relates to the specific functions of the job in addition to telephonese. Given that there are a large number of companies operating in the teleservices sector which specialise in various niche activities (see note 2), it makes sense to develop courses which address the companies' needs. The analysis of these needs and indeed the delivery of the course should take place within the context of the company. Therefore, course designers could approach companies directly and offer specialised training courses in say, French for Airline Staff. This would not only be more useful but it would shift the cost and staff selection towards the beneficiaries.

Conclusion

The teleservices industry has provided language educators with the challenge of equipping students with language skills to fill the vacancies in the field. So far, the Irish education system has not responded adequately to the demands for more speakers of less fashionable but highly demanded languages, including Italian. This article has argued that it is now time to provide new languages at schools and colleges and fast-track LSP courses which prepare students for the industry by focusing on key language competencies. By outlining some of the contents of phone calls, it was shown that it would be possible to develop a sufficient level of Italian to use it effectively in a short period of time. In order to stave off a major skills shortage, it is time to consider these options seriously.

Notes

[1] Leaving Certificate figures obtained from the Department of Education and Science refer to the number of pupils in all second level schools taking each subject in the Leaving Certificate programme (1998)

[2] figures for IDA supported teleservices companies indicate that the overall employment figures for that year were 4,350 permanent positions distributed amongst 31 companies. These figures would have grown substantially since 1997 and would underestimate the real number of staff dealing with phone enquiries.

[3] I distributed a questionnaire to colleagues asking them to comment on difficulties they had on the telephone as well as job satisfaction etc.

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Cúrsa Inserbhíse i mBéal Feirste don Ghaeloideachas

Seán Mac Corraidh
Coláiste Ollscoile Naomh Muire
Béal Feirste

Ba mhaith leis an údar buíochas a ghlacadh le heagarthóir *An t-Ultach* as cead a thabhairt ábhar an ailt seo, a bhí san iris sin i bhfoirm eile, a fhoilsiú anseo.

Abstract
Teachers have been practising in Irish-medium primary schools in Belfast and beyond since 1971, yet it is only recently that a pathway for Irish-medium education has been offered at St Mary's University College, Belfast. In the provision of in-service courses at the college, a module entitled Sainchúrsa Gaeilge do Mhúinteoirí i nGaelscoileanna *(a specialised course for teachers in Irish-medium schools), was drawn up and delivered in the first semester of the academic year 1998-99, the author of the present article being the course tutor. The article is a synopsis of the content of the course and proposes an effective teaching learning model in a bilingual situation, formed from experience. The author concludes that student teachers who intend to teach in Irish-medium education need training in teaching strategies and methods conducive to the realisation of the objectives of good learning outcomes and second language acquisition. It is postulated that active participation of pupils in learning activities and communication in the second language are two fundamental features of Irish-medium education which entail exemplary professional practice, build confidence in children in their early years of schooling and instil competence as they go through their primary education.*

An Cúlra Áitiúil Stairiúil: Oiliúint in Easnamh

Tá an tumoideachas Gaeilge dá chleachtadh i gcathair seo Bhéal Feirste ó na seascaidí anall, an t-am ar bunaíodh an chéad naíonra. Go luath sna seachtóidí a bunaíodh an chéad Ghaelscoil i mBéal Feirste ar Bhóthar Seoighe ar neamhchead do na húdaráis oideachais ag an am. Ní raibh i ndán don Ghaeloideachas ó shin ach bláthú agus forbairt. Mar sin féin, cad é faoi na daoine, mé féin ar dhuine acu, a bhí mar stiúrthóirí ar na naíonraí úra agus mar bhunmhúinteoirí sna scoileanna úra a bhíothas a bhunú? Ní bhfuair muid oiliúint ar bith riamh sna modhanna/straitéisí cuí teagaisc nach bhfuil barr don mhúinteoir i nGaelscoil a chleachtadh le go dtarlóidh torthaí fónta foghlama in achair leathan-réimseacha an churaclaim agus le go sealbhóidh na daltaí an Ghaeilge san am céanna, go mór mór sna chéad trí bliana den bhunscolaíocht. Díomaite den chomhairle a chur i bhfeidhm ar ár gcuid teagaisc a thugadh comh-mhúinteoirí ba sinsearaí ná muid féin dúinn, comhairle den chuid is mó a bunaíodh ar an taithí agus ar an léamh s'acu ar ábhair an tumoideachais agus an dátheangachais, lean muide .i. na múinteoirí 'úroilte' slí teagaisc a bunaíodh ar an oiliúint a fuair muid i gcoláistí oiliúna i bpróiseas aonteangach.

Chuaigh mise mé féin i gcionn an teagaisc i nGaelscoil úrbhunaithe sa bhliain 1987 gan oiread is líne a bheith léite agam as an litríocht taighde a bhí ar fáil ag an am ar an tumoideachas agus ar an dátheangachas. Bhí mé gan tuiscint féin a bheith agam ar an fheiniméan teangeolaíoch a dtugtar 'idirtheanga' air. Bhí mise den bharúil nach mbeinn i bhfad ag tabhairt na Gaeilge do na daltaí a bhí faoi mo chúram go díreach mar a rinne na daoine fiala uilig a thug an Ghaeilge dom féin le linn m'óige ar scoil, ar ranganna oíche i mBéal Feirste agus ar chúrsaí Gaeltachta. Nach orm a bhí an bhreall! Bhí mé i ndiaidh neamhaird a thabhairt ar dhífear mór amháin idir an dá chás. Ní raibh mé féin in am ar bith lena linn sin ag iarraidh a bheith ag gnóthú go hacadúil in achair uile an churaclaim le cois a bheith ag iarraidh teanga a

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fhoghlaim san am céanna mar a bhí na páistí seo a bhí mé a theagasc. Mar sin, aon uair amháin a mhothaigh mé go raibh fachtóirí eile cé's moite de mo chuid teagaisc ag dul i bhfeidhm ar an Ghaeilge a bhí na páistí a labhairt agus a scríobh, b'éigean dom athsmaoineamh a dhéanamh ar an scéal.

Anois nuair a dhearcaim siar ar na luathbhlianta teagaisc a rinne mé agus an taithí agus an t-eolas atá agam anois ar an dea-chleachtas sa tseomra ranga i nGaelscoil a chur san áireamh, ní shílim go ndeachaigh mé rófhada ón chasán a rachainn air dá mbeinn ag tosú amach go húrnua amárach.

An Chumarsáid agus Leas Acadúil an Pháiste

Ar ndóigh, caitheann an múinteoir Gaelscoile an lá ní hamháin ag teagasc clár staidéir ach ag freastal gach áiméir le cuid Gaeilge na bpáistí a fhorbairt ó thaobh na héisteachta de, na tuisceana, na cainte, na léitheoireachta agus na scríbhneoireachta. Beidh ról lárnach mar sin ag an mhúinteoir sna cúrsaí seo cumarsáide atá le leas an pháiste ar ndóigh ó thaobh tuiscint na gcoincheap de in ábhair mar an Mhatamaitic, inar cheart go mbeadh plé agus cioradh idir an múinteoir agus an dalta agus idir na daltaí iad féin, ina bpéirí, ina ngrúpaí agus mar rang iomlán le deacracht mhatamaiticiúil a réiteach. Níl amhras ar bith ormsa ná go bhfuil modh na cumarsáide a chleachtaimid sa Ghaeloideachas le leas acadúil agus sóisialta an pháiste, ach de dheasca maslacht an mhodha chéanna gur iomaí múinteoir bocht a d'fhág sé cloite faoin trí a chlog Dé Luain féin agus nach bhfuil scríobh ar an bhaile a bheadh orthu teacht na hAoine!

Ní dhearnadh friotháil mar ba chóir ar shainriachtanais bhunmhúinteoirí na nGaelscoileanna i dtaca le hoiliúint inseirbhíse de, fiú féin agus curaclam úr á thabhairt isteach sna deich mbliana seo chuaigh thart. I gcaitheamh na mblianta sin 1989-96, dhéantaí múinteoirí i gcoitinne réidh do na hathruithe a bhí le cur i bhfeidhm ar na cláir staidéir in ábhair an churaclaim, idir chroí-ábhair agus ábhair thánaisteacha, trí laetha traenála. Chaithfeadh múinteoirí na nGaelscoileanna a theacht ar ais ó na seisiúin chéanna, suí agus oibriú amach dóibh féin cad é mar ab fhearr na cláir staidéir agus na spriocanna gnóthachtála a láimhdeachas ó thaobh an tumoideachais de. Sa deireadh ba é an cleachtadh ag na múinteoirí an lá traenála a chaitheamh sa scoil s'acu féin ag plé deacrachtaí le cur i bhfeidhm an churaclaim ina scoil féin agus ag cruthú áiseanna teagaisc leis na deacrachtaí sin a shárú agus lá saor acu ón ghnáthlá teagaisc.

Dúshlán, Suim agus Taitneamh

Threabh na múinteoirí leo ag cur curaclam leathan cothromaithe i láthair páistí, ag baint feidhme as modhanna agus as áiseanna teagaisc a d'éireodh as a bheith ag cur a gcomhairlí agus a n-acmhainní féin i gcionn a chéile ag cruinnithe foirne, leo féin i ndiaidh am scoile agus ag cruinnithe le comhordaitheoirí na n-ábhar. Chinnteodh sé seo go mbeadh an teagasc dúshlánach, suimiúil agus taitneamhach, agus go dtarlódh tuiscint agus foghlaim ar fónamh.

Díograis agus Díbhirce

Is mór go dearfa an méid atá bainte amach ó thaobh soláthar an tumoideachais agus an oideachais dátheangaigh de, ag foirne díograiseacha díbhirceacha na nGaelscoileanna agus atá dá bhaint amach go fóill acu ar chaolchuid áiseanna foghlama/teagaisc, agus duine ar bith a bhfuil páiste aige ar Ghaelscoil nó a bhfuil baint aige le ceann acu tuigfidh sé bri iomlán an mholta sin.

Mé féin an chéad duine a mbeadh sé de chúram air cúrsa inseirbhíse, a dtabharfaí *Sainchúrsa Gaeilge do Mhúinteoirí i nGaelscoileanna* air, a chur i gcionn a chéile agus a theagasc sa dóigh is go dtiocfadh le múinteoirí na nGaelscoileanna *Teastas san Fhorbairt Ghairmiúil do Mhúinteoirí* a ghnóthú. Tugtar tuairisc san alt seo ar ábhar an chúrsa agus ar na ceisteanna móra a ardaíodh lena linn.

B'ar mholadh príomhoide Gaelscoile a socraíodh ar struchtúrú an chúrsa agus leagadh amach dhá bhunaidhm. Chuirfí múinteoirí ar an eolas faoi:

- na hábhair thagartha atá ar fáil dóibh agus ar a n-úsáid chuí agus na modhanna/straitéisí múinteoireachta i nGaelscoil
- thabharfaí clár struchtúrtha do na

múinteoirí i labhairt agus i scríobh na Gaeilge

Bhí sé de chuspóir agam i ndeireadh an chúrsa:

- go mbeadh obair na múinteoirí ní b'éifeachtaí agus
- go mbeadh ní ba mhó muiníne ag rannpháirtithe an chúrsa as a gcuid oibre mar mhúinteoirí Gaelscoile

Chuir mé romham an Ghaeilge a bheith mar mheán teagaisc agam ar an chúrsa sa dóigh is go bhféadfaí cruinneas cainte agus cumas labhartha sa Ghaeilge a fhí isteach i ngach gné den mhodúl.

Polasaí Scoile

Thiar i lár na nóchaidí, bhí foireann uilig na scoile Gaeilge a raibh mé ag teagasc inti san am ag iarraidh polasaí a leagan síos a thabharfadh le fios i mbeagán focal don saol mór cad é a bhí muid ag iarraidh a bhaint amach mar Ghaelscoil agus cad é an fhealsúnacht a bhí ag treorú na hoideolaíochta sa scoil. Níl a fhios agam cá mhéad uair ab éigean dom cás na Gaelscolaíochta a mhíniú agus a chosaint le tréan dúthrachta ar lucht fiosrachta, ar lucht amhrais, ar lucht aineolais agus ar ndóigh ar lucht mailíse!

Ba léir go gcaithfí an saol mór, a bhí scoite amach ón bharrshamhail a shíl muid féin a bheith dá cleachtadh againn sa chóras a bhí againn, a chur ar an eolas faoi na slite teagaisc a bhí in úsáid againn le curaclam leathan a sholáthar do na páistí a bhí faoinár gcúram. Ar ndóigh, bhí an taobh eile den scéal ann go gcaithfimis féin a thuiscint go mbeadh tosaíochtaí ag múinteoir amháin, ó thaobh fealsúnacht na scoile de, a chuirfí i bhfeidhm go láidir is go sonraitheach ina chuid teagaisc nach mbeadh chomh tábhachtach sin uile ag an dara múinteoir. Dá dheasca sin chaithfeadh an fhoireann uile a bheith ag obair de réir an aon pholasaí amháin a n-aontófaí air sa deireadh.

Misneach, Dóchas agus Creidiúint

Ar an séala sin, d'iarr an príomhoide ar dhuine de bhunaitheoirí na scoile teacht isteach agus stair na scoile a thabhairt dúinn agus insint dúinn cad é spreag na daoine a bhunaigh an scoil lena leithéid de thionscadal ceannródaíoch a chur sa siúl sa chéad áit. Tháinig an duine sin isteach chuig cruinniú foirne gur labhair sé ar bhunú na scoile agus dúirt go raibh misneach agus dóchas agus creideamh sa rud a bhí ar bun acu ar na fachtóirí ba mhó a spreag de chéaduair iad agus a choinnigh ag dul iad. Dúirt an cainteoir fosta nach raibh a fhios aige cé acu seo ba deacra a dhéanamh; scoil a bhunú nó scoil a choinneáil ag feidhmiú ó cheann ceann na scoilbhliana. Fágadh an cúram sin orainn féin mar fhoireann scoile sa deireadh. I dtaca le treoir a thabhairt dúinn ó thaobh na fealsúnachta de, a mbunófaí polasaithe na scoile anois uirthi, moladh dúinn *Ár ndúchas - ár gcinniúint* (Mac Grianna, 1969: 103-17) a léamh. Thabharfadh sé dóchas agus misneach agus bealach réitithe dúinn an t-am a ba mhó a raibh na buanna sin uainn. I ndeireadh na díospóireachta, socraíodh gurbh iad seo thíos na príomhphointí i bhfealsúnacht na scoile, a threoródh agus a thaispeánfadh an bealach dúinn féin mar oidí i gcóras an Ghaeloideachais agus a thabharfadh léiriú don saol mór amuigh ansin fán obair a bhí ar siúl againn:

- gur scoil Ghaeilge í arb é an leanbh a croílár;
- go n-aithnítear an Ghaeilge mar theanga dhlisteanach agus oidhreachtúil ag muintir na tíre seo;
- gur le leas an pháiste oideachas trí mheán na Gaeilge a bheith á chur air a ligeann dó fréamhacha a chur ina shochaí féin agus ina chultúr féin; agus
- gur de dhlúth agus d'inneach phobal na Gaeilge í an scoil.

Mar sin de, nuair a thosaigh mé féin a dhréachtú chéad léacht an chúrsa, shocraigh mé ar an aiste chéanna (MacGrianna, 1969), a sholáthar do na múinteoirí agus iarraidh orthu í a léamh agus a phlé sa chéad seisiún. Aon uair amháin a bhí an aiste léite ag na múinteoirí chuir mé ceist orthu ar shíl siad an raibh baint ar bith aici le Gaeloideachas an lae inniu. Síleadh go forleathan go raibh, agus mar a tharla ba mhaith an pointe imeachta é le díospóireacht a bheith againn ar an iliomad ábhar ó Shakespeare go dtí próiseas foghlamtha na Gaeilge sa Ghaelscolaíocht!

Modhanna Teagaisc

Cuirtear oideachas ar gach páiste de réir a shainriachtanas féin, oideachas a bhfuil siad féin, mar pháistí, suite ina lár agus ina ndéantar úsáid den Ghaeilge mar mheán teagaisc. Creidimid go dtig linn cur ar chumas na ndaltaí leibhéil arda a ghnóthú trasna curaclam na bunscoile trid na modhanna teagaisc a chleachtaimid agus trid an mheas a shíormholaimid do na daltaí a bheith acu orthu féin agus trid an bhród a mhaímid ba cheart dóibh bheith orthu astu féin mar dhátheangaigh. Cleachtar modhanna teagaisc nach bhfuil ag brath go hiomlán ar an léamh ná ar an scríobh sa dóigh is go ndéanfar freastal cuí ar pháistí a mbíonn na scileanna sin ag sárú orthu. Dá mbeadh na háiseanna cearta againn, ba bhláfaire aris eile ár gcuid teagaisc ach nuair nach bhfuil, oibrímid de réir críonnacht na sean, 'muna bhfuil agat móin déan do ghorú le gréin.' Ní féidir ach go dtiocfaidh feabhas ar sholáthar áiseanna fiúntacha feidhmiúla teagaisc san am atá le teacht.

Sealbhú na Gaeilge

Táimid ag cur na Gaeilge i láthair páistí nach mbeadh faill acu í a fhoghlaim chomh hóg sin ina saol ar dhóigh ar bith eile agus táimid ag iarraidh oideachas den scoth a chur orthu san am céanna. Luadh na deacrachtaí a bhaineann le sealbhú an dara teanga ag na daltaí, sa chás s'againne an Ghaeilge, trid na gníomhaíochtaí foghlama agus na laigí foclóra, cruinnis agus struchtúir agus easpaí eile in úsáid na sprioctheanga a léirionn na daltaí le linn an phróisis seo. D'aontaigh na múinteoirí uile nach raibh deacrachtaí líofachta ná cur in iúl ag cur as do na daltaí ach go raibh na laigí uile agus na foirmeacha fabhtacha le sonrú ar urlabhra agus ar shaothar scríofa na bpáistí sa dara teanga go háirithe sa teanga a chleachtann siad i gcúrsaí acadúlachta agus i gcúrsaí nach de ghnáthimeachtaí an tseomra ranga iad. Scríobhfar níos mó ar phróiseas foghlamtha na Gaeilge sa Ghaelscoil san alt seo agus déanfar plé ar ailt a scríobhadh ar na mallaibh ar an ábhar céanna. (Mac Fhlannchadha, 1998: 4-6; NICC, 1992: 24).

Bród agus Muinín

Tugann sé ardú meanman do na páistí agus dá muintir go bhfuil siad ag cur eolais ar theanga na sinsear s'acu agus ar an chultúr ar de í, go minic i gcuideachta a chéile (Maguire, 1991: 99). Cuireann sé seo bród ar na páistí agus cothaíonn sé an mhuinín s'acu astu féin fosta nó aithníonn siad go bhfuil siad ag obair de réir toil a dtuismitheoirí agus go bhfuil na tuismitheoirí céanna ag déanamh monatóireacht ghéar ar dhul chun tosaigh acadúil agus sóisialta a gcuid páistí. Ar ndóigh luadh gur iomaí cineál tuismitheora ann agus nach gcuireann siad féin uile le polasaí scoile ó thaobh foghlaim na Gaeilge de.

An Dara Dearcadh ar an Saol

Táimid ag oscailt dearcadh eile ar an saol ina iomláine agus ag tabhairt léargas eile i dteanga eile do na páistí ar na coincheapa agus ar na scileanna agus ar ábhar na n-achar staidéir uilig sa churaclam. Daingníonn cúrsaí seach-churaclaim ár saothar leis an Ghaeilge a thabhairt amach as suíomh na hacadúlachta agus na scolaíochta.

Cuirimid ar chumas na ndaltaí seanlitríocht agus nualitríocht na Gaeilge a léamh agus bheith páirteach i gcruthú na nualitríochta. Pointe é seo a bhaineann leis an am atá le teacht sa mhéid is go bhfuilimid anois ag cur ar a gcumas cur le litríocht na Gaeilge más rogha leo é. Moladh gur cheart dúinn lucht éisteachta agus lucht léitheoireachta a leathnú amach d'obair na bpáistí. Mothaíodh go raibh ganntanas litríochta ann idir fhicsean agus neamhfhicsean ó thaobh páistí EC2 de agus tá An tÁisaonad Lán-Ghaeilge ar theann a ndíchill leis an scéal sin a chur ina cheart chomh maith is thig leo.

Obair Mhaslach

D'ainneoin na bhfachtóirí uilig a oibríonn in éadán an Ghaeloideachais, de thaisme agus d'aonghnó, is mór an t-iontas gur éirigh linn mar a d'éirigh go dtí seo agus gur dóchas agus misneach agus obair chrua ba bhunsiocair leis an rath a bhí ar an ghluaiseacht go dtí seo. Moladh gur cheart cur in iúl d'oidí faoi oiliúint a bhfuil rún acu a bheith ag cleachtadh a gceirde sna Gaelscoileanna gur ar mhasla oibre a bunaíodh agus a coinníodh na scoileanna céanna ag feidhmiú agus nach bhfuil an obair ag éirí a dhath níos fusa de réir mar a chaitear na scoilbhlianta! Ar an ábhar sin,bhí múinteoirí den bharúil gur cheart do mhic léinn fios iomlán an

scéil a bheith acu sula dtuma siad iad féin i bhfarraigi suaite an tumoideachais.

Luathbhlianta na Bunscolaíochta

Is ceart cur in iúl de chéaduair cad is eochairchéim (EC) ann. Is é atá ann ná achar ama in oideachas gach dalta. Dhá eochairchéim atá i gceist ó thaobh na bunscolaíochta de. Tosaíonn EC1 le Bliain a hAon agus críochnaíonn ag deireadh Bhliain a Ceathair. Fágann sé sin go mbeidh bunús na ndaltaí ocht mbliana d'aois i ndeireadh an ama sin. Tosaíonn EC2 le Bliain a Cúig agus críochnaíonn ag deireadh Bhliain a Seacht. Fágann sé sin go mbeidh bunús na ndaltaí aon bhliain déag ina dheireadh sin.

Tá rún agam cur síos a dhéanamh anois ar na saintréithe a bhaineann le hEC1 mar atá leagtha amach ag *Clár staidéir don Ghaeilge ag eochairchéim a haon* (DENI, 1996) ó thaobh cleachtadh agus modheolaíocht na Gaelscolaíochta de, le cuidiú *Abhar treorach: an Ghaeilge san oideachas lán-Ghaeilge* (NICC, 1992).

Rachaidh páisti isteach i mBliain a hAon sa Ghaelscoil, a mbunús cibé scéal é, i ndiaidh dhá bhliain a chaitheamh ar naíonra Gaeilge. Tosaíonn páisti as cúlrai éagsúla Gaeilge ar na naíonraí. Bheadh an Ghaeilge mar mháthairtheanga ag fíorbheagán acu. Bheadh na cupla focal ag cuid acu ach ní bheadh Gaeilge ar bith ag a mbunús. Is é príomhchuspóir obair stiúrthóir naíonra, i dtaca leis an Ghaeilge de, go sealbhóidh na páisti an spriocteanga le bealach a éascú don fhoghlaim sa bhunscoil ina ndéanfar úsáid den Ghaeilge mar mheán cumarsáide agus foghlama. (Ar ndóigh, leagfaidh an naíonra cuspóirí amach d'fhorbairt iomlán na bpáistí fosta)

Cluinfidh na páisti an Ghaeilge á labhairt agus tógfar de réir a chéile ar an tuiscint s'acu go díreach mar a rinneadh roimhe sin sa bhaile i gcuideachta an teaghlaigh s'acu leis an mháthairtheanga ach go ndéanfar é sa naíonra ar dhóigh struchtúrtha le gníomhaíochtaí a mbeidh cuspóirí dearfa foghlama agus teanga ar intinn ag an stiúrthóir leo.

Léirionn tuarascáil Hickey (1997) go mbíonn éifeacht nach beag ag tuismitheoirí a bhfuil labhairt na Gaeilge acu agus a bhaineann úsáid aisti, ar ghnóthachtáil a gcuid páistí sa naíonra, agus gur minic fosta a ardaítear próifil na Gaeilge i mbaile an linbh atá ag freastal ar naíonra Gaeilge agus sa phobal ar de é. D'fhéadfá a rá gurb é atá sa Tum-Réamhscolaíocht ó thaobh na Gaeilge de, ná próiseas forbartha scileanna éisteachta, amhairc, tuisceana agus táirgthe urlabhra a chuirfidh ar chumas an pháiste treoracha agus caint an mhúinteora a thuiscint agus cumarsáid idirghníomhach a bheith aige le múinteoirí sa dara teanga ar an bhunscoil dó.

Faoin am a rachaidh siad isteach i mBliain a hAon sa bhunscoil mar sin, beidh an múinteoir ag dúil is go mbeidh dúshraith láidir ag na páistí sna scileanna sin a dhéanfaidh réidh iad do shaol na scoile agus a thabharfaidh eolas an bhealaigh dóibh le bheith ag gnóthachtáil chomh hard agus atá ar a n-acmhainn foghlama sna spriocanna gnóthachtála atá leagtha amach do na hachair staidéir le dul chun cinn na ndaltaí a mheas (NICC, 1992: 6). Ba cheart go mbeadh na scileanna sóisialta s'acu agus a gcumas tuisceana sa Ghaeilge forbartha go leor le ligean dóibh dúshraith a chur ina mbunoideachas. Sna luathbhlianta uilig, beidh an múinteoir ag díriú ar chumas labhartha an pháiste a thabhairt ar aghaidh sa dara teanga i ngach gné den churaclam, mar atá scríofa ag na múinteoirí a chuir an clár staidéir don Ghaeilge ag EC1 le chéile.

> 'Sa chomhthéacs seo, is gá díriú go comhfhiosach ar fhorbairt bhunchumas teanga i ngach gné den churaclam. Is dúshlán mór é seo, nó is gá pleanáil go mion comhsheasmhach ó thaobh na forbartha seo. Fiú amháin agus gníomhaíochtaí a ndearnadh iad a phleanáil agus achair eile neamhtheanga churaclaim mar fhócas acu, caithfear pleanáil teanga a shníomh tríothu i gcónaí.'
>
> (DENI, 1996: 2)

An Mhodheolaíocht is Éifeachtaí

Mar sin de, is léir gurb í an mhodheolaíocht is éifeachtaí agus is torthúla teagaisc i mblianta EC1 ná an ceann ina bhforbrófar an éisteacht,

an tuiscint agus an labhairt sa Ghaeilge le linn gníomhaíochtaí fóirsteanacha, taitneamhacha, dúshlánacha, suimiúla i ngach achar staidéir den churaclam. Mar thoradh ar mhodheolaíocht seo na cumarsáide sna luathbhlianta, bheifí ag dúil is go mbeadh na páistí ina n-aonar, mar phéirí, mar ghrúpaí nó mar rang ábalta treoracha an mhúinteora a thuiscint agus tascanna a chur i gcrích; go mbeadh cumas na bpáistí i labhairt na Gaeilge ag bisiú i rith an ama le linn na foghlama sna hachair staidéir uile, agus go mbeadh na heispéiris réamhléitheoireachta i dtuiscint agus i labhairt an dara teanga ag réiteach an bhealaigh don léitheoireacht agus don scríbhneoireacht a ndéanfar forbairt orthu i gcuideachta a chéile mar atá molta ag DENI (1996: 1):

> 'Ba cheart amharc ar Éisteacht, Tuiscint agus Labhairt, ar Léitheoireacht agus ar Scríbhneoireacht, mar aonad iomlán nach féidir a fhorbairt ina n-aonar. Tá siad uilig le sonrú i ngach gné den churaclam, bíodh an ghníomhaíocht foirmiúil nó neamhfhoirmiúil, ina gníomhaíocht aonair nó ina comhghníomhaíocht. Ba chóir an nasc dúchasach seo idir na trí sprioc gnóthachtála a aithint agus a fhorbairt i gcónaí.'

Cion Feidhme an Mhúinteora

Ní féidir a sháith tábhachta a chrochadh le ról an mhúinteora sna himeachtaí seo go léir i bhforbairt gníomhaíochtaí fiúntacha le bunscileanna glactha agus táirgthe sa dara teanga a thabhairt ar aghaidh mar cheachtanna réamhléitheoireachta agus mar ábhar a spreagann an labhairt sa teanga sin. Aon uair amháin a bheidh na páistí ar obair ag léamh agus ag scríobh agus le linn na ngníomhaíochtaí réamhléitheoireachta agus réamh-scríbhneoireachta, caithfidh an múinteoir spéis a léiriú, fuinneamh a chaitheamh, dea-shampla a thabhairt, atmaisféar sócúlach a chruthú agus leas a bhaint as na straitéisí uilig a dtig leis smaoineamh orthu. Déanfaidh sé sin le léitheoirí agus scríbhneoirí cumasacha sa dara teanga a dhéanamh de nuashealbhóirí seo na Gaeilge. Lena chois sin, tá aige le hamharc i ndiaidh na muintire sin a bhfuil deacrachtaí foghlama acu le tuilleadh molta, le cúnamh breise agus le tacaíocht ar leith. Ról dúshlánach, leathan, barr-thábhachtach ó thaobh próiseas foghlamtha na Gaeilge sa tumoideachas agus ó thaobh forbairt intleachtúil, shóisialta, mhothúchánach, fhisiciúil agus spioradálta an linbh is ea ról an mhúinteora.

Gnéithe Buntáisteacha den Dátheangachas

Is mian linn ó thaobh an dea-chleachtais de go háirithe, na páistí a bheith ag caint lena chéile faoina gcuid oibre ar ndóigh agus go mbeadh siad in ann a bheith ag súgradh le páistí eile go sona. Mar sin de, tríd an chur chuige cumarsáideach, tá an fhaill ann dearcadh dearfach ar bharúlacha daoine eile agus ar an fhoghlaim i gcoitinne a chothú i measc na ndaltaí. Ba mhaith liom tagairt a dhéanamh do chúpla pointe a dhéantar sa leabhar, *The bilingual family* (Harding agus Riley, 1986: 8), ar na buntáistí san fhoghlaim atá ag an leanbh a fhaigheann dhá dhearcadh dhifriúla ar an saol tríd an chumas atá aige bheith ag smaoineamh ar dheacrachtaí atá le fuascailt aige in obair na scoile sa dá theanga. Mé féin a chuir Gaeilge ar an Bhéarla:

> 'Ceann de na buntáistí is mó a bhaineann leis an dátheangachas nó go n-aithníonn páistí an-bheaga féin nach bhfuil an ceangal idir na rudaí agus na hainmneacha a thugann siad ar na rudaí sin ina cheangal riachtanach, go dtig ainmneacha éagsúla a thabhairt ar na rudaí céanna. Is cosúil go dtugann an cleachtadh luath seo sa teibíocht solúbthacht meabhrach agus oscailteacht, rud a thuairiscíonn turgnamhaithe agus síceolaithe go minic. Cosaint atá sa tsolúbthacht seo ar an eispéireas míthaitneamhach sin, mar a chítear don aonteangach é - bheith ag smaoineamh sa dá theanga. Déanta na fírinne, ní miste leis an dátheangach. Tá cúpla cúis leis seo. Sa chéad áit, tá próisis smaointeoireachta ann atá neamh-bhriathartha nó réamhbhriathartha. Sa dara háit, is comhfhiosach a bhíonn ár smaointeoireacht bhriathartha de ghnáth agus toghfaidh an dátheangach an teanga le bheith ag smaoineamh inti. Sa tríú háit, tá sé de ghnás ag mórán dátheangach bheith i dtólamh ag smaoineamh san aon teanga amháin, cé is móite den uair a mbeidh siad ag baint feidhme as teanga eile. Sa cheathrú háit, is maith le mórán dátheangach go dtig

leo smaoineamh i ndá theanga agus is minic a bhainfidh siad úsáid as an chumas sin go cruthaitheach i gcionn fuascailt fadhbanna, cineál de smaointeoireacht taobhach.'

Tá impleachtaí dar liom ag na buntáistí sin uile don oideolaíocht sna luathbhlianta sa Ghaelscoil le leas a bhaint as na dóigheanna praiticiúla, neamhfhoirmiúla ina bhfoghlaimíonn páistí fán saol in EC1. Piocfaimid rud chomh bainte le saol an linbh le liathróid. An chéad teagmháil a bheadh ag an leanbh leis an rud ná é a fheiceáil agus a láimhdeachas agus a chaitheamh san aer agus gníomhartha eile fisiciúla a dhéanamh leis an rud. Cluinfidh an leanbh an t-ainm sa chéad teanga, ag na daoine thart air, ar an rud seo a thig leis a cheapadh agus a chaitheamh agus a chiceáil. I gcionn na haimsire, tabharfaidh sé féin iarraidh an t-ainm a rá é féin. Is cosúil go gcuideoidh ainm eile a chluinfidh an leanbh, ar naíonra nó ar scoil, i gcomhthéacs súgartha, sa dara teanga ar an rud a raibh oiread sin de theagmháil fhisiciúil aige leis, an t-eolas a fuair sé faoi shaintréithe na liathróide agus faoin saol i gcoitinne a inmheánú ar dhóigh is iomláine.

I dtaca leis an phointe sin nach miste leis an dátheangach bheith in innimh bheith ag smaoineamh sa dá theanga agus go bhfuil próisis smaointeoireachta ann atá réamhbhriathartha nó neamhbhriathartha, ba cheart go bhfaigheadh na páistí faill úsáid a bhaint as gach céadfa ina n-eispéiris fhoghlama agus ní amháin as amharc na súl agus as cluinstin na gcluas: an dá spreagthach is mó a bhíonn in úsáid againn. Mar shampla de sin i gcionn foghlaim aithint agus scríobh na litreacha don leanbh, go bhfeicfeadh sé an litir, go ndéanfadh sé an litir ar dhromchlaí éagsúla sa ghaineamh tirim agus fliuch mar shampla agus go ndéanfadh sé an litir ar pháipéar gainimh a thabharfadh céadfa eile isteach sa phróiseas foghlama.

Cuireann mo thaithí féin mar mhúinteoir i nGaelscoil, in EC1 agus 2, leis an cheathrú pointe atá luaite thuas mar bhuntáiste ag an dátheangach agus is minic a bhaininn agus a bhaineadh na páistí leas as an chumas agus as an chúlra dátheangach a bhí acu i gcionn fadhbfhuascailte dóibh. Bhí rogha agus faill ann dóibh tarraingt as tobar a n-eispéireas foghlama i saol an Bhéarla agus i saol na Gaeilge, rogha nó léargas nach mbeadh ag an leanbh nach raibh d'eispéiris aige ar fhoghlaim sa saol ach tríd an aon teanga amháin.

Bochtaineacht Shochtheangeolaíoch

Tá sé maite agam cheana féin san alt seo go raibh riamh agus go bhfuil ar fad daoine nach bhfuil baint dhíreach acu leis na scoileanna Gaeilge in amhras agus ar an ghannchuid eolais ar na modhanna teagaisc a chleachtar sa Ghaelscoil leis an churaclam ina iomláine a chur i láthair daltaí. Ceistítear cruinneas agus intuigtheacht na Gaeilge a labhraíonn na páistí mar shampla, agus deirtear nach dtuigfeadh cainteoir dúchais Ghaeilge an cineál Gaeilge a chleachtann siad. Déarfainn féin nach slat tomhais fóirsteanach ina leithéid de chás é an cainteoir dúchais ach fosta ní sin mar a fuair mise an scéal am ar ar bith ar thug mé mo rang síos go Gaeltacht Thír Chonaill. Bhí iontas ar bhunadh an tí oiread sin Gaeilge a bheith ag páistí nár tógadh sa Ghaeltacht ag aois chomh hóg sin agus níor tharla bac ar bith cumarsáide de dheasca idirtheanga na ndaltaí s'againne. Ar ndóigh, is cnámh spairne í seo i dtíortha eile ina gcleachtar an tumoideachas. Bhí mé féin i measc scata múinteoirí a thug cuairt ar scoileanna in oirdheisceart na Breataine Bige cúpla bliain ó shin agus ba bheag aird a tugadh ar an chineál Breathnaise a bhí á labhairt ag na páistí, agus chonacthas dom go raibh tuiscint ar fónamh ag na múinteoirí do na fachtóirí uilig atá ag dul i bhfeidhm ar an Bhreathnais agus dá mhéad ag na páistí. I gCeanada, is léir go bhfuil rath ar an tumoideachas Fraincise. Bhí 250,000 páiste sa tír sin i gclár tumoideachais sa bhliain 1989-90 agus measann tuismitheoirí go ndéanfaidh sé dátheangaigh dá bpáistí agus go gcuirfidh sé le failleanna fostaíochta na ndaltaí. Ina dhiaidh sin agus uile, tá scoil eile smaointeoireachta sa tír sin a chuireann in iúl a leithéid seo de bharúil mar atá in: Hammerly, H. (1991: 7), bunaithe ar chur chuige teangeolaíoch amháin, caithfear a rá:

> 'The sociolinguistic poverty of the classroom situation is of great consequence. In the communicative/ interactive language classroom, the student can normally interact with only one fluent second language

> speaker, the teacher, who isn't a native speaker of the language being learned. At the same time, the student interacts frequently with 25 or 30 classroom peers who misuse the language just as badly as he or she does. Such loosely directed and largely unsupervized peer interaction can hardly be linguistically enhancing; while it encourages fluency, it indirectly lowers accuracy. Peer pressure tends to enforce a standard of mediocrity, not a standard of excellence.'

Is léir go bhfuil na fachtóirí sin, ag múnlú an dara teanga ag daltaí. De réir mo bharúla anois, ba chóir don mhúinteoir aird na bpáistí a dhíriú ar struchtúir sa dara teanga le linn cur i láthair clár staidéir an churaclaim gan na daltaí a bhascadh le cleachtaí foirmiúla leadránacha gramadaí.

Na Dúshláin don Mhúinteoir sa Suíomh seo Teagaisc/Foghlama

Is rún dom cur síos a thabhairt ar chuid de na straitéisí a chleachtann múinteoirí Gaelscoile, bunaithe ar a bhfuil feicthe, cluinte, agus léite agam, leis an Ghaeilge a thabhairt do pháistí le linn dóibh i a bheith in úsáid acu mar mheán teagaisc do na hachair staidéir atá i gceuraclam na bunscoile. Agus sin ráite, is léir cad é chomh mór atá an dúshlán don dá pháirtí atá sa suíomh áirithe seo teagaisc/foghlama.

I dtaca leis an mhúinteoir de, is é is dócha ná gur fhoghlaim sé an Ghaeilge ar scoil agus nach raibh sí leis ó thús a óige. Mar sin de, beidh laigí ina chuid cainte i gcuid de na réimsí teanga nach gceirfeadh stró ar an chainteoir dúchais. Is i réimse cur in iúl na mothúchán is mó a bhíonn deacrachtaí ag múinteoirí a d'fhoghlaim an Ghaeilge, mo dhála féin. Tá an múinteoir anois san áit a gcaithfidh sé an saol mór agus níos mó a chur in iúl do pháistí i dteanga nach bhfuil leis go hiomlán. Ba mhinic a nochtaí agus is minic a nochtar go fóill m'éagumas le míniú a thabhairt i nGaeilge ar ábhar ná le cur síos a thabhairt ar choincheap teibí éigin go beacht agus go cruinn le cothrom na Féinne a thabhairt do na daltaí faoi mo chúram i gcúrsaí foghlama agus i sealbhú na Gaeilge. Is cuma cad é chomh cleachta agus atá an múinteoir le téarma ná le focal a bhfuil níos mó ná sé litir ann, beidh sé urnua i gcónaí ag an dalta. Is léir go bhfuil an próiseas sin cuardaigh ó thaobh an mhúinteora de ag teacht le dea-chleachtas agus leis an chur chuige gairmiúil. Cuireann an múinteoir lena chuid eolais féin le go mbeidh sé níos éifeachtaí i gcionn a ghairme. Tarlaíonn cuardach seo an eolais agus an chuidithe ar bhunús laethúil sa Ghaelscoil.

De thairbhe gurb í an Ghaeilge atá faoi scrúdú anseo agus gurb í an Ghaeilge an meán teagaisc d'achair staidéir uilig an churaclaim sa Ghaeloideachas, cés móite den Bhéarla, caithfimid amharc ar na fachtóirí a théann i bhfeidhm ar an rath nó ar an easpa ratha a bhíonn ar an teagasc sna hachair staidéir sin. Tá ábhair i gceuraclam na bunscoile agus tá siad réasúnta furasta a láimhdeachas sa Ghaelscolaíocht ó thaobh na Gaeilge de. Ó mo thaithí féin de, tagann an Stair, an Tíreolaíocht, an Teagasc Críostaí, an Ealaín agus an Ceol go héascaí le nádúr an oideachais chumarsáidigh.

Téarmaíocht Mhatamaiticiúil agus Eolaíoch

Os a choinne sin, tá ábhair eile agus orthu sin bheadh an Mhatamaitic agus an Eolaíocht agus cuid den téarmaíocht bheadh sé úr ag an mhúinteoir féin gan trácht ar an téarmaíocht sin a oibriú isteach i míniú na gcoincheap matamaiticiúil agus eolaíoch. Bíonn a fhios ag an mhúinteoir gur dócha nach gcluinfidh ná nach bhfeicfidh na daltaí an téarma matamaiticiúil ná an t-ainm eolaíoch i nGaeilge taobh amuigh de gheataí na scoile. Chomh luath agus a thosaigh mé a mhúineadh i nGaelscoil, fuair mé léaró ar an chineál deacrachta a bhain le téarmaíocht na Matamaitice Feidhmiúla ó thaobh an fhoghlaimeora de. Ar ndóigh, is deacracht í sin a bhaineann le húsáid na Gaeilge sa tsochaí seo ar fad, agus níl sé ar chumas an oideachais Ghaeilge amháin an ceann casta sin a leigheas. Tá ról lárnach le himirt ag an tuismitheoir in oideachas a pháiste sa bhaile le cúiteamh a dhéanamh san easpa sin. Má tharlaíonn cur agus cúiteamh idir tuismitheoir agus leanbh sa bhaile faoi obair na scoile go laethúil, daingneofar pointí agus tarlóidh méadú tuisceana.

Foclóirí á Siortú

Rud eile faoin téarmaíocht atá ag teastáil le gach ábhar a theagasc go héifeachtach sa

bhunscoil Ghaeilge, níor thóg bunús na múinteoirí i ar chúrsaí oilscoile, cúrsaí Gaeilge féin agus nuair a chuaigh siad i gceann na múinteoireachta, b'éigean dóibh gach cineál foclóra a shiortú le teacht ar na téarmaí seo. Níor ghoill ceist seo na téarmaíochta go mór orm féin caithfidh mé a rá, nó chonacthas dom go dtig an lipéad ag deireadh an phróisis agus gur tábhachtaí i bhfad an chaint agus an díospóireacht a dhéanfaí ar na coincheapa i dtaca le hinmheánú an eolais agus le forbairt na Gaeilge a chinntiú. Ina dhiaidh sin bhíodh deacrachtaí agam féin le téarmaíocht san Eolaíocht agus sa Mhatamaitic go háirithe nuair nach dtiocfadh liom sanasaíocht an téarma ná brí bheacht an fhocail a aimsiú. Gheofá amach go gcaithfeá focal a chuardach, iarraidh a thabhairt ar a fhuaimniú mar is ceart agus ansin é a oibriú isteach i ngnáthchaint réidh nádúrtha an tseomra ranga go minic agus go muiníneach.

Na Dúshláin don Leanbh

Cad é mar atá an cur chuige cumarsáideach seo sa Ghaelscoil i dtaca leis an leanbh ó thaobh na Gaeilge de? Faoin am a rachaidh an leanbh isteach i mbliain a haon sa bhunscoil, beidh sé ar a laghad ábalta treoracha an mhúinteora a thuiscint agus freagairt a thabhairt den chuid is mó i mBéarla. De réir a chéile méadóidh an tuiscint agus an cumas labhartha sa sprioctheanga le cuidiú an chláir chumarsáidigh i gcur i bhfeidhm an churaclaim agus i bhforbairt an dara teanga. Tá sé le feiceáil ansin cad iad na smaointe atá ar intinn an mhúinteora agus é ag iarraidh clár sa tumoideachas a sholáthar. Tá aige le curaclam a chlúdach agus san am céanna tá aige le gach áiméar a fhreastal leis an sprioctheanga a fhorbairt chomh maith. Ní féidir an dá chuspóir sin a chur i gcrích go héifeachtach gan pleanáil chuí a dhéanamh ná gan fios cinnte a bheith ag múinteoir cad é atá sé ag iarraidh a bhaint amach. Ní féidir bua gasta a fháil ar láimhdeachas an dá chuspóir sin ag an aon am amháin. Glacann sé cleachtadh agus taithí le máistreacht a fháil air ach baineann sé le loighic agus le tabhairt faoi deara fosta le hócáidí torthúla san fhoghlaim acadúil agus i bhforbairt na Gaeilge a thabhairt do na daltaí. Ní thig sealbhú na Gaeilge a scaradh amach ó chur i láthair an churaclaim ná óna theagasc. Caithfidh an dá chuspóir a chéile a thabhairt ar aghaidh agus is fachtóir é sin chomh maith le fachtóirí eile a imríonn tionchar ar an Ghaeilge a chluin na páistí, a labhraíonn agus a léann siad, agus a scríobhann siad.

Tábhacht agus Príomhaíocht na Teanga Labhartha

Creidim féin mar mhúinteoir go mbraitheann gnóthú teangeolaíoch an pháiste sa Ghaeilge orainn a aithint gur scil shóisialta í an chaint agus go gcaithfear ócáidí tairbheacha cainte a sholáthar taobh istigh de gach achar staidéir ag an dá Eochairchéim go háirithe sna luathbhlianta bunscolaíochta. Nuair a chuirtear an bhéim ar an chumarsáid ag aois an-óg sa dara teanga mar a chuirtear sa Ghaeloideachas, tarlaíonn cumarsáid agus tá sé sin cruthaithe againn. Sealbhaíonn na daltaí an sprioctheanga ar an ábhar nach labhraítear leo ach í sa scoil agus oideachas foirmiúil á chur orthu. Ní dhéanfar cainteoirí dúchais Ghaeilge de pháisti an Ghaeloideachais go deo. Ina dhiaidh sin, thig linn cainteoirí cumasacha a dhéanamh díobh ach an fhoirfeacht a bheith mar idéal againn agus mar chuspóir inár gcuid teagaisc. Tugaimid faoi deara aon uair amháin a bhaineann leanbh leibhéal amach ina chuid cainte a dtig leis cumarsáid a dhéanamh lena chomhdhaltaí agus lena oide go stadann forbairt sa sprioctheanga. Tá sé de chúram ar an mhúinteoir sin a aithint agus beartú le cuidiú leis an leanbh gnóthú ar leibhéal níos airde ó thaobh na teanga labhartha de.

Impleachtaí don Léitheoireacht agus don Scríbhneoireacht

Má ghnóthaíonn an leanbh níos fearr sa teanga labhartha, beidh sé ina chuidiú mór dó ina dhul chun tosaigh sa léitheoireacht agus sa scríbhneoireacht. Caithfear straitéisí agus modhanna teagaisc a chleachtadh le héisteoirí maithe a thuigeann a n-iarrtar orthu a thuiscint agus le cainteoirí cumasacha a dhéanamh de na daltaí sular féidir iad a thabhairt chun cinn sa léitheoireacht ná sa scríbhneoireacht. Tá áit lárnach ag an oide mar sholáthraí agus éascaitheoir forbartha sa sprioctheanga labhartha le straitéisí pleanáilte teagaisc agus le beartaíocht chúramach le scileanna an amhairc agus na héisteachta, na tuisceana agus na cainte a chinntiú agus a dhaingniú agus a shaibhriú. Bunchloch a chaithfear a leagan síos go daingean sula dtéitear i gceann na

léitheoireachta agus na scríbhneoireachta agus le linn na hoibre sin, i bhfeithicil an churaclaim mar atá, an Ghaeilge.

Teagasc ina bhfuil an Toradh Ceannard

Tá modhanna múinteoireachta ann agus cleachtann múinteoirí iad a bhfuil sé ar intinn acu gach pointe a mhíniú agus a léiriú do na daltaí agus a chreideann gur sin an t-aon dóigh amháin lena dhéanamh. Bíonn an chaile agus an chaint in úsáid acu de shíor i mbun na hoibre mínithí seo. Cleachtann siad ceisteanna druidte den chuid is mó a bhfuil freagraí aonfhoclacha orthu agus bíonn an bhéim ar an fhreagra i gcónaí ina gcuid teagaisc agus má tharlaíonn tuiscint le linn an áirimh, is maith sin ach ní den riachtanas é le teacht ar an fhreagra cheart. Is féidir cleasanna beaga a úsáid le teacht ar an fhreagra chomh tiubh géar agus is féidir agus le cuidiú Dé, dar leo, tiocfaidh an lá a dtuigfidh na créatúir a bhfuil ar siúl acu. Bíonn an aird agus an bhéim uile ar sholáthar an fhreagra sa mhodheolaíocht seo agus cead ag an tuiscint fanacht go fóill. An cleachtadh is measa sa mhodh seo ná a bheith ag tabhairt ar pháisti fiche sampla eile a dhéanamh den chineál chéanna oibre a bhfuil siad i ndiaidh bua uirthi a léiriú don oide.

Ní dhéantar saothar na ndaltaí a mheas ach ag deireadh achair, bíodh an t-achar sin ina lá, ina sheachtain, ina théarma nó ina bhliain féin! Beidh deacrachtaí leis an mhodh sin. Ní fheicfidh an múinteoir go dtí go ndéanfaidh sé an measúnú suimitheach sin cad é atá an dalta bocht a dhéanamh contráilte agus fán am sin, ag deireadh an achair, beidh an dalta ina mháistir ar an obair sin a dhéanamh an dóigh chontráilte. Mhaigh tuairisc Hadow (1931), gur cheart go mbeadh rannpháirtíocht ghníomhach á himirt ag na páisti i suíomh ar bith foghlama/teagaisc agus nár cheart dóibh a bheith ina mbéal gan smid ina suí ag tabhairt isteach an eolais.

Tá an cineál seo oideolaíochta bunaithe ar chleasanna agus ar theagasc algartam agus má tá bua agat ar na cleasanna céanna, éireoidh leat agus muna bhfuil, ní éireoidh. Déanfaidh an t-oide cúpla sampla ar an chlár dubh, osclóidh na daltaí na téacsleabhair agus déanfaidh siad fiche sampla de na tascanna áirimh. Ar an dóigh seo caillfear na páistí a bhfuil deacrachtaí acu agus fágfar na páistí éirimiúla dubh dóite ag cur ceiste orthu féin cad chuige a gcaithfidh siad an oiread sin samplaí a dhéanamh nuair atá bua an áirimh áirithe sin acu? Damnaíodh an cur chuige seo sa *Primary survey report* (1981) de chuid DENI. Measaim féin gur cleachtadh atá ann a sheachnaítear sna modhanna teagaisc a chleachtar sa bhunscolaíocht Ghaeilge ar an ábhar go mbíonn forbairt na teanga matamaiciúla agus mar sin de, na tuisceana chun tosaigh in intinn an oide.

Straitéisí Próisis sa Teagasc

Dá mbeifeá le cur síos ar a bhfuil ag tarlú san oideolaíocht ina mbíonn béim ar an tuiscint agus ar phróiseas na foghlama, bheadh na straitéisí seo a leanas in úsáid. Tharlódh plé idir an múinteoir agus na daltaí agus i measc na ndaltaí iad féin. Bheadh obair chuí phraiticiúil sa siúl ag na daltaí. Dhaingneofaí bunscileanna agus dhéanfaí cleachtadh orthu. Chuirfí scileanna comháirimh i bhfeidhm ar réiteach deacrachtaí matamaiticiúla i ndiaidh ceisteanna druidte agus ceannoscailte a chur agus a fhreagairt. I rith an ama bheadh caint ar an bhuneolas, ar na scileanna, ar an tuiscint, ar an teanga agus ar fhorbairt na scileanna sóisialta. Bheadh béim go láidir ar chluichí agus ar fhorbairt na meabhairliofachta. Más cuimhin leat féin an cineál sin oibre a bheith ar siúl agat nuair a bhí tú féin ag foghlaim na Matamaitice ar an bhunscoil, bhí oide agat a raibh aird aige ar phróiseas na foghlama agus má bhí múinteoir Mhatamaitice agat nach ndearna a dhath de na straitéisí sin atá luaite agam a chleachtadh, bhí múinteoir agat a mheas nach dtiocfadh freagraí leathghasta go leor dá mba ar dhroim giorria féin a thiocfadh siad! Is féidir breathnú ar an dá mhodheolaíocht seo mar a bheadh contanam mór amháin idir an toradh agus an próiseas. Measaim féin gur áit éigin idir eatarthu seo atá an mhodheolaíocht idéalach do theagasc na Matamaitice sa bhunscolaíocht Ghaeilge a thabharfaidh áit lárnach do rannpháirtíocht na ndaltaí i bhforbairt na bpróiseas uile atá sa chroí-ábhar seo i gcuraclam na bunscoile. Tá buntáistí le breith sa dá mhodh i bhforbairt léirshamhail foghlama agus teagaisc san ábhar seo. Go luath i gcur i bhfeidhm na léirshamhaile sin, i mblianta EC1, bímid mar oidi ag iarraidh muinín na bpáistí astu féin a thabhairt ar aghaidh agus ansin níos faide anonn sa

phróiseas, i mblianta EC2, páistí a dhéanamh cumasach an aidhm is mó sa teagasc a bhíonn againn.

Léirshamhail do Theagasc na Matamaitice sa Bhunscolaíocht

Má scrúdaítear fealsúnacht na Matamaitice mar atá sí leagtha amach ag NIELB, in *Lines of development in mathematics*, a tháinig chugainn sa bhliain 1996 agus a mholtar go láidir a leanúint, is léir go bhfuil a bunús sa léirshamhail a chuir Bruner chun cinn thiar sa bhliain 1966 a dtugtar na modhanna uirthi .i. ionghníomhach, iocónach agus siombalach. Chuir Liebeck inár láthair i 1984 léirshamhail in *How children learn mathematics* inar moladh eispéireas, teanga, pictiúir, siombailí mar chéimeanna forbartha agus is ionann sa chás ag líntí forbartha NIELB ach gur gníomh a thugtar ar an eispéireas. An bharúil a bhí ag Bruner gur tríd an eispéireas praiticiúil a bheadh faill an teanga a fhorbairt ar an mhodh ionghníomhach. Ar an mhodh iocónach, dhéanfaí pictiúr tríthoiseach le trealamh coincréideach agus pictiúr déthoiseach óna n-éireodh teibiú agus meabhairíomháineachas.

An Smaoineamh Loighciúil agus an Taitneamh

Mhaífinn féin go mbíonn níos mó ná an aidhm seo teagaisc chun tosaigh in intinn an oide sa bhunscoil Ghaeilge agus é i mbun theagasc na Matamaitice. Sna luathbhlianta in EC1, tá cúrsaí éisteachta, tuisceana agus táirgthe urlabhra sa dara teanga barrthábhachtach agus daltaí ag iarraidh bua a fháil ar na scileanna agus ar na coincheapa a bhaineann le réimsí éagsúla staidéir i ngach aon chuid den churaclam. In EC2, tá an scéal mórán mar an gcéanna ach go dtógfar ar na scileanna tuisceana, éisteachta, agus táirgthe cainte sa Ghaeilge. Is ag deireadh an phróisis seo a thig na siombailí agus níor cheart a bheith ag deifriú chuig an chlárú ar pháipéar roimh thógáil na sainscileanna sin. Ba cheart go mbeadh an bhéim ar an chéad chuid den phróiseas seo sa tumoideachas leis an sealbhú teanga agus le tógáil scileanna na Matamaitice a uasmhéadú agus le cothrom Féinne agus gach faill a thabhairt do na daltaí uile. Mar a aithníodh in NICED (1982), aidhm de chuid an oideachais é a bheith ag moladh do pháistí smaoineamh go loighciúil. Déanfaidh an Mhatamaitic an aidhm sin a chur i gcrích ach í a theagasc ar dhóigh loighciúil agus an loighic sin a chur ar na súile do na láimhseálaithe óga uimhreacha agus gan dearmad a dhéanamh den spórt ná den phléisiúr is féidir a bhaint aisti gan peann a chur ar phár go fiú.

Conclúid

Tá saineolas ar na fachtóirí a théann i bhfeidhm ar an fhoghlaim agus ar shealbhú an dara teanga i suíomh dátheangach teagaisc/foghlama mar atá i nGaelscoil ag teastáil go géar ó ábhair oidí. Caithfear cur ina luí orthu gur dúshlán as cuimse é ag múinteoir curaclam a theagasc agus ócáidí tairbheacha sealbhaithe teanga a sholáthar san aon am amháin. Díograis agus dibhirce na buanna atá de dhíth leis an dá aidhm sin a chur i gcrích ar aon uain lena chéile nó is é an múinteoir an t-aon chainteoir líofa sa dara teanga atá ar fáil ag na daltaí sa chomhthionól sin.

Ní féidir an tairbhe atá le baint as dearcadh eile i dteanga eile a fháil ar an saol i gcoitinne a shéanadh. Is geall le miorúilt é an cumas sa dara teanga a bhíonn ag páistí Ghaelscoile nuair a chuimhnítear gur ó chúlra aonteangach Béarla den chuid is mó a thagann a mbunús. Tá an cumas ilteangeolaíoch sin sa dúchas sa duine óg ach an dara teanga a chur ina láthair, rud a dhéantar go struchtúrtha, pléisiúrtha agus go nádúrtha sa Ghaelscolaíocht.

Tarlaíonn sealbhú an dara teanga le linn gníomhaíochtaí dúshlánacha foghlama i ngach achar den churaclam agus ar ócáidí neamhacadúla fosta. Caithfear a rá go mbaineann bochtaineacht le caighdeán labhartha na ndaltaí sa dara teanga agus iad ag déanamh lomaithrise ar urlabhra a chéile. Ina dhiaidh sin, tá stór d'ócáidí foghlama sa dá theanga acu atá lena leas acadúil, rud nach bhfuil ag leanbh san oideachas aonteangach. An Rannpháirtíocht Ghníomhach agus an Chumarsáid, buntréithe modhanna teagaisc na bunscolaíochta Gaeilge.

Méadaíonn an dá bhuntréith sin muinín na bpáistí astu féin sna luathbhlianta agus leathnaíonn siad a gcumas agus a n-eolas de réir mar a théann na páistí trí bhlianta na bunscolaíochta.

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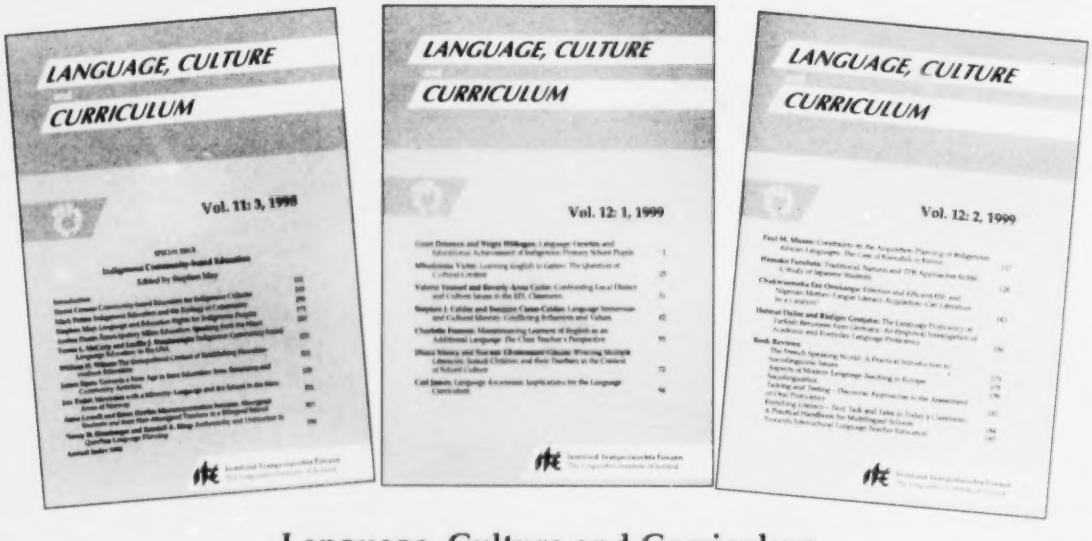

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Languages and Language Policies in the EU: Haphazard Views from Outside

Alfred F. Majewicz
International Institute of Ethnolinguistics
& Oriental Studies
Steszew
Poland

The current language situation in the world is most probably such that approximately 98% of its entire population are users of no more than 2% of the existing up to 7,000 ethnolects that, for various reasons, can be regarded as having the status of separate, independent languages. In other words, about *two percent* of the entire population make use of 98% of the existing languages globally.

This means that the absolute majority of languages are called 'lesser-used', small, or very small languages. Moreover, due to a number of factors, some 50% of them are endangered or seriously endangered and predicted to face extinction within the coming two to five (not 20-50!) decades.

To complete this picture, one has to be made aware that no more than 5% of the entire possible number of languages (i.e. some 350) are more or less fully described, with more or less comprehensive reference grammars, both-way dictionaries, handbooks, etc. existing. No more than 20% of them have any description, be it partial, outdated, amateurish, and not many more have been recorded in any way. Still, most are known only by their linguonyms, and their very existence is barely admitted.

This very abundance of the seriously endangered and yet remaining unrecorded languages constitutes an unprecedented challenge to linguists and linguistics to locate all possible resources to record as much as possible of these unique and otherwise unrecoverable assets of mankind's heritage, especially after the *summa linguistica* in the form of *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (Asher et al. - eds. Pergamon Press, 1994) and the *Atlas of the World's Languages* (Moseley & Asher - eds. Routledge, 1994) have been published.

Another very important, perhaps the other *most important* challenge for linguists and linguistics is to guarantee an effective say in shaping and implementing prospectively constructive language policies, taking into account at the same time promotion of majority and/or state languages and protection of endangered languages as well as education in languages of international spheres of influence and foreign languages in general on the level of states as well as EU-type interstate level. In Europe, the example of France serves probably best to show how disastrous can be such a policy when wrongly conceived and wrongly aimed: it is France that has the worst minority-language-protection record in Western Europe and it is French, not long ago the second most important international language that - in spite of the costly efforts of France's authorities - is loosing its importance worldwide astonishingly rapidly and seemingly irreversibly.

With the creation and expansion of the European Union it was - rightly - decided that all state languages of the member-states were official for the entire Union. This decision was doubtless correct, but the resulting conclusion that all official speeches, proceedings, documents, etc. be interpreted and translated from almost every language into almost every other language - not necessarily: the cost, reportedly tremendous, makes this apparent waste of gigantic sums of tax-payers' money utterly irrational and - if one cares in the least for the tens of millions starving - totally immoral.

It is understandable that all states and all nations want to protect and promote their languages and equally understandable can be fears of a possible supremacy of one language, or some languages, over others, but still it is a matter of appropriate policies rather than irrational wastefulness that can solve such problems.

It should be obvious that no language spoken by a few-million population on the limited territory of a small- or medium-size country can compete globally or even on a limited international scale (say, within Europe) with a language used by hundereds of millions in numerous countries throughout the continents. So, a policy of pushing a language from the former group into such a competition should be outrightly rejected as definitely having no future. Instead of paying for translations from e.g. English or German into e.g. Dutch, the Dutch-speaking tax payer should rather interest himself in financially supporting Netherlandic studies for foreigners in Holland and Belgium, or at universities abroad, and all other language (and culture) courses at all levels for speakers of other languages. I have to admit that personally I have never met a native speaker of Dutch/Flemish totally unable to communicate in either English or German - nor have my friends.

A language to have sound international aspirations has to be open and tolerant to foreign elements and influences of all sorts, otherwise it is doomed to failure - and French is *the* example. There are obvious benefits for native speakers of an international language: the speakers of any variation of English, be it British, American, Indian, or Nigerian, do not have to worry much about communication travelling the world over, while a Hungarian has to master the rudiments of at least one from the short list of international languages, preferably - of course - English, to feel the same degree of comfort.

There is also, however, a price to be paid for the internationalisation of a language and such a language must be prepared - most effectively, by appropriate language policies - to pay this price. Native speakers of such an international language must be prepared to be tolerant and encouraging when confronted with an imperfect foreign speaker and to apply the best of their will to overlook lexical inexactitudes and stylistic oddities in a text prepared by their professional colleague from a distant country. The English were prepared (and the role of the policy of e.g. promoting BASIC is obvious), the French were not: I witnessed hundreds, if not thousands, of cases of the French applying much effort in belittling the French of their foreign interlocutors instead of even trying to understand, and cases when the French of a foreign interlocutor was closer to the prescriptions of *Grammaire Larousse* than that of the native speaker were not exceptions.

The case of Japanese, the language known for being exceptionally difficult to learn and used by an exceptionally closed society, can perhaps best demonstrate that even tremendous amounts of foreign elements absorbed cannot endanger vitality and originality of - in fact - any language: a Japanese dictionary listing foreign words only (the so-called *katakana* language) with its 1,325 pages of dense print by far surpasses in volume many ' great' bilingual dictionaries, and worries resulting from this overflooding with 'foreign intrusion' seem to be but a favorite subject for foreigners taking part in Japanese-language speech contests eagerly sponsored worldwide by Japanese authorities. It is maybe not out of place here to point to the fact that Japanese is swiftly gaining popularity in secondary- and academic-level education in many countries, leaving behind e.g. French.

The European Union of sovereign states with its open societies and democratic principles, with a remarkable variety of languages and cultural backgrounds, with none dominating or dominated as the principle, is at present the only such political structure in existence. Though imperfect, it is preferably a model structure for many other regions of the globe. And for the foreseeable future it will remain such - multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual, with each individual national heritage and the variety of languages, including these 'lesser-used', preserved, protected, developing and promoted. (The European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages can serve as another institutional model for many parts of the world).

This unification, but not uniformisation, of Europe (and one has to remember that the EU is planned to expand), will bring further and much more intensified internationalisation of lives, and need for incomparably more intensive interlingual contacts. Translation and interpretation from every language into every other will become too costly and too inefficient, and - if in fact new state-members are accepted - virtually impossible.

While looking for candidates to be elected as representatives of individual state-members in international decision-making bodies, the requirement of fluency in *several* (three or more) European languages will have to be among those decisive ones, and all EU member states will finally have to agree on a very limited number of international working official languages with some nations curbing their (frankly insane) ambitions even if for concrete compensation from the lingually privileged communities.

At least a considerable portion of the large sums currently spent on translation activities, possibly with the suggested compensation, should in turn be quickly relocated to substantially improve and develop foreign language education in all the member states to adjust it to requirements of possibly conflictless living in multilingual structures (e.g. the EU). The fact that not only a Greek or a Swede seeking an international career but also a Britain and a Frenchman are required to have a good command of several foreign languages would on the one hand create a very strong motivation for learning languages, and on the other hand in the best way secure both the promotion of all the languages involved as well as the minimalisation of the privileged-language effect.

Language and education policy makers should, however, be fully aware that Europe is not where the world ends and should thus take into consideration also the inevitable intensification of globalisation processes.

Far-sighted policies not only elevated English to the indisputable number one place in foreign language education almost everywhere, but caused production of English-teaching aids to become one of the most profitable industries. Nevertheless, in many countries and regions the number-two demand in language education is not another European language (as it used to be for decades) but an important Oriental language, like Japanese, Chinese, or Arabic. The introduction of such languages into secondary- and university-level curricula seems crucial for many reasons. Our own experience with running the Chair of Oriental and Baltic Studies at Poznań shows that graduates with a good command of e.g. Japanese or Chinese, Russian and English, in addition to at least one more European language and the native Polish or other 'lesser-used' tongue (and such graduates are by no means exceptions!) are among the most eagerly sought after by numerous prestigious institutions competing to hire them, not only in Poland.

Poland - from whence these remarks emanate - is among the countries striving to reintegrate with West European institutions. The entry to NATO has just been ratified and talks are in progress for the country to be admitted to the EU. For five decades of imposed Soviet dominance, Russian was practically the sole language to be compulsorily taught in primary schools, throughout the secondary education system (standards four to five years), and for at least some time in universities. In spite of years of teaching, results were meagre nationwide due in the first place to negative attitudes and limited possibilities to use the language (literature in Russian was available in abundance in big cities but free cross-border travel was impossible). Almost equally bad were results of instruction in West European languages (English, German, French) in secondary schools and universities: lessons were perceived as an unnecessary burden and exam requirements minuscule because of censorship, inaccessibility of interesting foreign publications, and - most important - closed borders and severe restrictions on travel. Any instruction in German was bluntly prohibited in territories with the officially 'non-existing' German minority population (as in e.g. Oppeln/Opole Silesia in the south-west). In consequence, foreign-speaking Poles were in fact a rarity and it remains now a serious inherited issue (consider the virtually mute Polish soldiers integrating

with their NATO colleagues). With the transformation of the entire political system in 1989 and the opening of the borders, the situation in this respect changed dramatically, with the demand for foreign language teaching steadily and rapidly increasing and the emergence of hundreds of private institutions to meet this demand beyond schools. English naturally takes the lead, with German following, and Russian being the total looser. The popularity of French has considerably decreased, while Spanish, Italian (pilgrimages to John Paul II play an important motivating role here), and even Dutch or Japanese are offered by separate schools not only in the biggest cities. Language studies at universities are among the most popular, Oriental languages included. Young Poles finally became motivated to learn languages and, as if to make up arrears, an increasing number become polyglots, preparing themselves and their country to turn into genuine citizens of the united Europe. I sincerely doubt that Polish, with its extremely complicated grammatical structure (and because of it), can ever become a language of international communication throughout Europe after Poland eventually becomes an EU member (though it served in just this capacity very well for decades throughout the Baltic republics, Belarus and the Ukraine), but I can easily imagine Polish being then offered in school curricula in the West - after all, Polish is among the twenty five largest languages in the world as far as the population of its users is concerned.

As this paper is to be printed in Ireland, let me conclude it with a remark related to Irish. It is definitely the only state language in the EU that is indeed seriously endangered, and it is at the same time the only EU state language discriminated against: the whole EU translation machine obligatorily involves all EU state languages save one - Irish, the only one of them that needs protection. It seems that the EU should be more generous in relation to the language that played such a remarkable role in the formation of the entire (West) European civilisation.

Suggested Reading

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From L2 to L3/4: an Investigation of Learners' Metalinguistic Awareness and Learner Strategies

Muiris Ó Laoire, Mary Burke, Mary Haslam,
An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta/Institute of Technology
Tralee

Abstract

This paper is based on research conducted among students of French, German and Spanish as L3 L4 at tertiary level. Almost all students had experienced thirteen years of school-based learning of Irish as L2. The study made some preliminary investigations into the nature of the learners' metalinguistic knowledge and awareness, as a result of exposure to formal instruction in Irish and explored the extent to which this metalinguistic ability facilitates or otherwise affects the learning of L3/4. It was hoped to determine the extent to which learners of L3 transfer or modify strategies that they had previously deployed in the learning of Irish. This part of the study focused on specific processing strategies, as well as focusing on the language learning process itself. This paper is the first part of a longitudinal study, which makes preliminary investigations into the nature of the relationship between students' learning strategies and metalinguistic knowledge in the learning of Irish and their metalinguistic and strategic transfers in the learning of L3 L4 (French, Spanish or German).

Introduction

The Irish language has a unique position in Irish schools, being compulsory as a subject at both primary and secondary levels. It is of course, the first official language of the country and the mother tongue of about 5% of the population. It is therefore regarded as an important aspect of the cultural and linguistic continuity of the nation and its status as such is espoused by a majority of the population. (Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin, 1984: 5; Ó Riagáin, 1992; Ó Riagáin, 1997: 32-35). Recent surveys of public attitudes demonstrate a large degree of support among the public for a policy of increasing the bilingual competency of the population. Its promotion, through the educational system is seen, therefore as a significant part of a policy of reversing language shift towards various degrees of bilingualism. It has been calculated that Irish students are exposed, on average, to 3,186 hours of formal instruction in the language - excluding non-contact hours e.g., homework, attendance at all-Irish courses, private tuitions etc. (Ó Laoire, 1996: 55)

Even with all this significance attached to it, the Irish language in education has however been associated with problems of poor motivation and under-achievement. These problems often begin in primary school where students receive on average, one hour of formal instruction in the language each day for eight school years. Research conducted by Harris, in 1984 showed however that one third of all primary school students make minimal progress in Irish. This figure is borne out by research into students' achievements Ó Fathaigh (1991) Ó Laoire (1997) and by the high rate of failure among candidates among ordinary level, as opposed to among higher level students in the terminal, Leaving Certificate examination. The present paper, representing preliminary findings of research in progress takes place against the background just outlined, where the Irish language is accorded such emphasis and such pride of place.

Objective of Study

This study is based on research conducted among students of French, German and Spanish as L3/L4 at tertiary level. Almost all students had experienced thirteen years of school-based

learning of Irish as L2. It has always been assumed by teachers of both Irish and foreign languages(FL) in Ireland that learning Irish with all the particular conditions that surround it, has had some relation to or some bearing on the way that students approach the L3, typically French, German or Spanish. Studies in this area to date in Ireland have been regrettably few. Bearing in mind that there is evidence, as supported by Bialystok (1989, 1994); Karmiloff-Smith (1986) and Gombert (1990), regarding the acquisition of metalinguistic awareness, which indicates that learners consciously or subconsciously draw on various sources of previous language learning in all subsequent language learning, [learning L3/L4, for example], the present study sought to determine the nature of the learners' metalinguistic knowledge and awareness, as a result of exposure to formal compulsory instruction in Irish as they approached and learned L3/L4. It was hoped to explore the extent to which this metalinguistic ability facilitates or otherwise affects the learning of L3/L4. This study built on the notion of language transfer as explored by Gass and Selinker (1992); Odlin (1989) and by Schlachter & Hart (1979) where transfer is seen not so much as a process, but rather as a constraint imposed by previous knowledge, e.g. inferencing.

There was also the concern with the instructed acquisition faculty. It was hoped to determine the extent to which learners of L3 transfer or modify strategies that they had previously deployed in the learning of Irish. This part of the study focused on specific processing strategies, as well as focusing on the language learning process itself.

Languages in an Institute of Technology

The Institute has a total student body of 3,500. Developed in the 70s, the former RTC's initially had a mandate to provide vocationally orientated awards at certificate level, but have since gone on to also award diplomas and degrees. The Institute in Tralee offers courses of a varied nature, taught across three Schools of Business, Science and Engineering. None of the students are therefore language specialists.

The National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) does not stipulate a pass in a foreign language as an entry requirement. It is, however, necessary to pass either English or Irish. 98% of the students are on NCEA courses, and the remainder on an NTCB (National Tourism Certificate Board) course in Professional Cookery. At present, about 50% of courses have language as compulsory, and all others offer language as an elective, usually French or German. Spanish is offered only as minor language elective in the Languages and Business course (with major French or German), and is therefore an L4 for those concerned, all of whom would already have followed the higher level in another L3.

In 1996 the Institute of Technology, Tralee piloted a *Language Policy* in order to attempt to deal with heterogeneous groupings with the pedagogically unsound situation of beginners and Leaving Certificate students in the same class. A modular system was developed involving a total of six modules, with module 1 as *ab initio*, module 2, equivalent to Leaving Certificate, ordinary level and module 3 equivalent to Leaving Certificate, higher level. All first year students are therefore placed in the module that is suited to their level of language proficiency. Business students have 5 contact hours, Science students have 3, with Engineering students having 2 hours weekly.

The Participants

The participants in this short study are 75 students from the schools of Business, Engineering and Science. They were predominantly in the 17-20 years age group which is typical of the vast majority of our undergraduate students at tertiary level, with most coming from a rural or small village background and English-speaking home and neighbourhood domains. 33.4% were studying French, 54.6% were studying German and 12% were taking Spanish. Only 14 or 18.6% were studying two FLs: 4 studying French/Spanish, 5 studying German/Spanish, 5 studying German/French. Relatively few had had exposure to L4.

52% of those studying French had studied another FL. Of the 33 students studying German, 81% had already had exposure to

contact within formal education with another FL while, 100% of students studying Spanish had already had exposure to another FL. For these students, Spanish was in fact the L4.

The students were surveyed by questionnaire towards the end of the second semester. The data yielded here is preliminary, and it is hoped to set up a longitudinal study where further research will extend the purpose and scope of the present one. It is also intended to probe the extent to which metalinguistic and strategy awareness are internalised and thus affect learned outcomes. It is hoped to do this by extended interview, and by analysis of soft data like learner diaries, teachers' diaries, retrospective interviewing, case studies etc.

The Scope of the Present Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised three parts. The first part targeted background information, course, language being studied, age, background, language learning history, periods spent in the target language speech community etc.

The second part of the questionnaire sought to explore learners' reactions to the Irish language, including an investigation of the extent to which learners had come into contact with it and used it after leaving school. It sought information on background knowledge, and on examination performance. In exploring general attitudes to Irish it intended to gain some valuable insight into the learning strategies used by informants, by providing them with a list of learning strategies, adapted SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning(Oxford, 1990) from Abraham's and Vann's case study (Wenden & Rubin, 1987) comprising cognitive, metacognitive, social-affective strategies as outlined by O'Malley and Chamot, (1990). Here learners were asked to tick the options which applied to their own style and method of learning and to specify any other learning strategy they deployed which was not listed.

The third part of the questionnaire, *Irish and Other Languages* focused on the same information sought in part two, but in this case, it applied to the learners' experience of L3 - French, German or Spanish in post-primary school and at third level. It was hoped here to explore the nature of the relation if any between learners' experience of learning Irish as L2 and French/German or Spanish as L3. Learners were asked if studying L3 was *'easier'* because they had previously studied Irish and significantly, they were also asked to comment on any similarities or differences they perceived between the approach [taken by themselves] to learning Irish and to learning other languages. This part of the questionnaire intended to gain some valuable insight into the learning strategies used by informants, by providing them with a list of learning strategies, adapted from Abraham's and Vann's (1987) case study, comprising cognitive, metacognitive, social - affective strategies as outlined by Chamot (1987); Cohen (1987); Chamot & Küpper (1989) and O'Malley & Chamot (1990). Here learners were asked to tick the options which applied to their own style and method of learning and to specify any other learning strategy they deployed which was not listed. Finally, a number of BALLI (Horowitz, 1983) items to identify students' beliefs about language learning with a view to correlating relatively these beliefs with the findings on the use of learning strategies e.g. if the connection of specific belief related to a choice or deployment of a particular learning strategy.

Preliminary Data

[A] Levels

The majority of students questioned had studied both Irish and FL at ordinary level. 58.6% of those interviewed had studied Irish at ordinary level whereas 28 students, 37.4% had studied language at higher level. Three students did not present themselves for Irish in the terminal, Leaving Certificate examination.
(See Table A, page 4)

An analysis of *Tables B and C* (*see page 56*) shows that more students who *chose* to continue their study of languages at the ITT had studied Irish and/or FL at higher level than those who continue language simply because it is compulsory. Of those who chose to continue their study of languages, 45.8% had studied Irish at higher level for the Leaving Certificate, although only 27% had studied FL to this level. This is in stark contrast to information gathered

from students for whom the study of a FL is compulsory at the Institute. Of these students, only 22.3% had presented for higher level Irish and only 14.8% for Higher level in FL. It is also worth noting that of these 27 students, over half had never studied FL at secondary school. Student motivation levels are also remarkably lower in this group.

[B] Irish and L3/4: Metalinguistic Awareness

Before being questioned about how they reacted in general to learning Irish, learners were brainstormed about the experience of learning Irish itself. They were asked to reply to the following question: *when you recall learning Irish, what images come to mind ?* Some of the comments are included here, including the positive and negative and make for interesting reading.

- liked speaking it
- native language
- learning tenses, grammar and verbs
- poetry
- hard
- blackboard and finger pointing-teachers
- being bored
- projected slides
- long essays
- memorisation
- Irish prose stories
- grinding
- interesting
- traditions
- charts on wall
- flash cards
- out of date
- green, green pastures
- Ireland long ago
- learning of passages
- rain!
- stupid stories
- the past
- ill-humoured teachers
- Dingle
- great fun
- culture

Learners were questioned then to evaluate in an affective way the experience of learning Irish with the question: *Did you enjoy the study of Irish?*. A slight majority (44%) responded negatively, while 40% of learners stated that they had liked learning Irish, with 10.5% stating that they had *sometimes* liked learning Irish.

The extent and circumstances of language contact and language use after school, in the case of Irish were also targeted. Surprisingly little research has been conducted in this important area to determine the nature of language use and contact by students of Irish in the immediate years after post-primary school. In this case, 52% declared to have had some contact with the language in the intervening one to three years since leaving post primary school.

The main areas of contact (seeing, hearing the language as distinct from using it in a productive-skill sense) were : tv, at home, at work (unspecified), visit to the *Gaeltacht*, or other. Fewer students (36%) reported actual language use. A perusal of the extent of this use is revelatory, from exchanges including the odd word with friends (14.8%) to using it as a secret code abroad, where using English introduced an unwelcome risk of being understood. The majority again (64%) did not use the language on leaving school.

Table A
Levels of Irish and L3/4 taken at Leaving Cert in case of all respondents studying languages at IT, Tralee
N = 75

Language	Ordinary level	Higher level	No level specified	Not taken
LC Irish	58.6%	37.4%	-	4%
FL in LC (chosen and mandatory in IT)	38.6%	22.6%	16%	22.6%

It is clear from Table A that the choice of higher level in Irish does not presuppose the selection of higher level in the FL. Of the 44 students who studied Irish to ordinary level, over half of them, 29 students, also presented for ordinary level in FL. Of the 28 students who studied Irish to higher level, only 17 students, 22.6% presented for Higher level in FL. It would appear at this point that the FL was perceived as being more difficult. This notion will be explored in the section on strategy transfer. It is worth noting incidentally that 16% of those surveyed did not specify what level they sat in FL for the Leaving Certificate and that a significant number of students, 22.6%, had studied in FL.

The nature of the relationship between studying Irish and the FL was then explored. In many ways, this constituted the core of the questionnaire. Students were asked if studying the L3 was actually *easier* than Irish. A a majority, (52%) replied that they had found the FL easier. This concept of a language being *easier* was related in the main to issues external (except for memorisation) to the experience of learning the grammar, vocabulary and lexis. It centred more on experiential issues like - wanting to learn and the status of the L3. These in learners' opinion facilitated learning more than metalinguistic awareness. The metalinguitic awareness transfer from Irish does

Table B
Levels of Irish and L3 taken at Leaving Cert by respondents who chose to study language at IT, Tralee
N = 48

Language	Ordinary level	Higher level	No level specified	Not taken
LC Irish	52%	45.8%	-	2.2%
FL in LC (chosen in IT)	48%	27%	18.8%	6.2%

Table C
Levels of Irish and L3 taken at Leaving Cert by respondents who study language as a *mandatory* subject at IT, Tralee
N = 27

Language	Ordinary level	Higher level	No level specified	Not taken
LC Irish	70.3%	22.3%	-	7.4%
FL in LC (mandatory in IT)	22.3%	14.8%	11.1%	51.8%

not seem to occur- with 60% of learners replying that it was not easier in fact to study L3 due to the fact that they had already studied Irish [for at least 8-13 years]. Although of those who stated that it was in fact easier to study an L3 having already studied Irish, 20% of total surveyed used metalinguistic awareness descriptors:

- Because I understood what tenses were
- I had a better understanding of grammar
- Because we knew what to learn
- Because I applied the same techniques
- I was learning rules

It would appear that in the case of the vast majority of learners such metalinguistic awareness is not present or they have not been made conscious of it. Yet, when asked if they had perceived similarities or differences in the approach to learning Irish and L3, a majority had mentioned similarities in the approach to learning. Again these similarities seemed to hinge on descriptors of the metalinguistic type.

Understanding and learning tenses-verbs are mentioned by the vast majority of students. Differences perceived are related to the Irish syllabus, or the method of learning, with some limited reference to metalinguistic awareness and learner strategies.

[C] Strategy Transfer

This study sought to establish any learner strategy transfer from experiences with Irish to their experiences with a subsequent language. The students' perception is that the L3 is easier than Irish at a rate of 52%. When asked which language they found easier to learn, the students perceived the FL to be easier. However, in the Leaving Certificate, more respondents took the higher level paper in Irish than in the FL, presumably because they perceived the higher level in the FL to be too difficult.

Further investigation of *easier* revealed that the concept of easier, was associated with interest (23%), in that the FL as a subject appeared to be new and exciting. Some students had just commenced study of a new language as opposed to their 12 years of Irish and had therefore not reached learner fatigue levels. Other features mentioned were associated with methodology, implying that the foreign language teachers somehow made it easier than teachers of Irish.

The majority student feeling is that studying Irish did not help them in their subsequent acquisition of an L3. The negative factors mentioned in why this is so, include that they 'confused the words', as they felt Irish is 'unlike other languages', evoking the issue of language distance and lack of cognates between Irish and English.

It is interesting to note that those who did feel it was of benefit, showed evidence of a more developed metalinguistic aptitude in that they specifically mentioned such elements as:

- I understood what tenses were
- I applied the same techniques
- I was used to learning rules

Of importance here we feel, is the disparity between student perceptions and their subsequent declarations of strategies employed. The survey, based on the SILL had asked learners to report the language learning strategies used by them in Irish and in L3/L4. There appeared to be little or no difference in the strategies generally used in learning L2 (Irish) and in learning L3 or L4. Despite their overall impression of a lack of transfer in skills acquired in learning Irish, analysis of their accounts of strategies deployed in Irish, and in the foreign language, do not differ widely, except on two elements in particular. They report *dictionary use* more in L3 and *guessing meaning from context* more in L3. The data also revealed that students did not use metacognitive strategies to any considerable degree, but reported high use of strategies using mental processes (repeating, taking notes) which show a high rate of dependency on teacher-led activities or initiatives.

Such data offers scope for a number of observations in that perhaps the layout of the questionnaire lead them to blindly tick the same boxes in both instances, and also points to perhaps a lack of awareness of transfers in strategies from their learning experiences in Irish. The latter opens up the potential for

further research perhaps detailing student awareness of the strategies they employ and their effectiveness.

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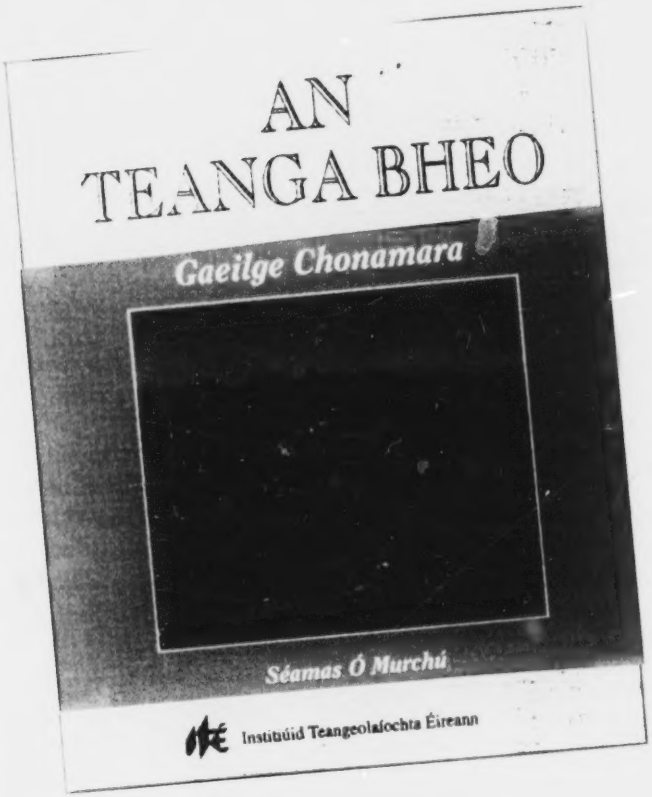

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Proficiency of Irish Adults in European Languages

Pádraig Ó Riagáin
Teresa Gorman

Introduction

Dramatic, even spectacular, economic, political, cultural and social changes have taken place in Europe over the last decades of the twentieth century. They include the internationalisation of production, capital flows and markets, the emergence of transnational and supranational agencies, the internationalisation of culture, political changes in Central and Eastern Europe and significant demographic changes in most countries. As a result of these trends and pressures, a new agenda and new priorities for language policy are beginning to emerge.

The European Union, multinational corporations and modern states alike are geared towards enhancing competitiveness within the context of an internationalised economic framework. These concerns subordinate language policy (and, indeed, most aspects of social policy) to the demands of the market and supporting labour and product flexibility rather than stability and security. From this perspective, the activities of the state in regard to language policy are not concerned with language or cultural policy *per se*, but geared towards creating the conditions which are considered to promote economic competitiveness within the international economic order.

The European Union in its 1996 White paper *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society* has stated, in response to the developments noted in the introduction, that proficiency in two Community languages in addition to their mother tongue 'has become a precondition if citizens of the European Union are to benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them in the border-free single market'. Even this statement conceals the very real concern of the EU officials. For example, the EU *Green Paper on European Social Policy* (1993) speaks of language policy as the 'Achilles' heel' of so many community efforts in the fields of economic and social policy. Migration figures are one key indicator of the problem. In an economic union, dedicated to the integration of capital and labour markets, the Green Paper notes with concern that only 2% of the resident population of the EU were born in another member state!

The concern cannot, nonetheless, be purely economic. The disorderly implications of the social and economic restructuring which is occurring in Europe make it unavoidable that social order as well as economic growth has to be placed on the political agenda. In 1998, the Committee of Education Ministers in the Council of Europe stressed the 'political importance' of intensifying and diversifying language learning. Noting the 'challenges of intensified international cooperation', the promotion of 'mutual understanding and tolerance', 'the dangers of marginalisation and the development of the richness and diversity of European cultural life', the Committee concluded 'the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe can be met only by appreciably developing Europeans' ability to communicate with one another across linguistic and cultural boundaries and that this requires a sustained, lifelong effort which must be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies'. (Council of Europe, *Recommendation No.R (98)6*).

These European statements speak of intensifying rather than initiating a language policy. Actual trends have been moving in this direction for some time, although progress still remains to be established empirically in a satisfactory way. This paper addresses that

issue. In common with European trends, there has been a very considerable increase in the numbers of Irish people who have acquired a knowledge of European languages other than Irish and English. This fact can be readily established by reference to the results of public examinations. However, school examination statistics relate only to the under 18 year-old population. It is mostly in adult life that real foreign language needs reveal themselves, particularly for those in the work force. As far as we are aware, the ITÉ 1993 survey of languages in Ireland (Ó Riagáin & Ó Gliasáin, 1994) was the first national survey to collect self-rated data on the proficiency of Irish adults in European languages. In this paper, we review and assess selected features of that data[1].

In the first instance, we look at the measures of proficiency in foreign languages in Ireland and in the EU. In later sections, we examine the relationship between these measures and various social factors such as the age, gender, education, social class and place of residence of the respondents.

Proficiency in Foreign Languages

The ITÉ survey in 1993 first asked respondents simply if they 'could speak or understand - even an odd word - of any language - other than Irish or English'. Fifty percent (50%) of the national sample of just under 1,000 respondents said they could. (In an EU survey conducted in 15 countries two years later (1995) just 50% said, on average, that they had no knowledge of any language other than their mother tongue).

Those who claimed at least this minimal level of competence were then asked a further set of questions. These questions, which were first devised by the Committee on Irish Language Attitudes Research in the 1970s (CILAR, 1975: 116) in its survey of Irish language proficiency, asked respondents to rate their ability to cope with normal conversations on a six-point scale. Rather than use categories such as 'poor', 'fair', 'good', etc., the question was phrased to offer the respondent somewhat more guidance. The questions asked if respondents knew 'None', the 'Odd Word', a 'Few Simple Sentences', enough for 'Parts of Conversations', for 'Most Conversations' or finally, if they regarded themselves as 'Native Speakers'.
(Table 1, see page 67)

Although the percentages in the two highest ability categories are under 5% in all cases, the percentages at the next two levels are more substantial, particularly for proficiency in French. Fourteen percent of respondents claimed they could handle at least 'parts of conversations' in French, and a further 13% could manage a 'few simple sentences' (27% combined) as opposed to seven percent in German or another language. Thus, while French is the most widely known European language, the ratio of moderate to high ability speakers is higher for French than for the other languages. In other words, the dominant position of French is to a large extent accounted for by the much higher percentages in the middle order ability levels.

However, respondents who speak French also dominate the group who claim to have high levels of ability in any European language. In Table 2 (page 67), we examine the distribution of those 53 respondents who claim to speak at least one language at one of the top two levels of ability.

It has to be stressed that these respondents in total constitute a very small proportion (5%) of the overall sample. Nonetheless, the pattern shown by the table is fairly clear-cut. Two points may be noted. First, nearly three quarters of those who claim this level of fluency in any language speak French, and about one third of these also speak at least one other language at the same level. Speakers of 'Other' unspecified languages and German lag some way behind. Secondly, one fifth of this sub-sample overall rated themselves as having a high level of competence in more than one European language, but only one in sixteen were fluent in three languages.

Comparisons with Other EU Member States

The results of a Eurobarometer survey conducted by the European Commission in 1995 provide us with another estimate of European language skills in Ireland. This survey was undertaken in all 15 member states (c.1,000

respondents over 15 years in each state). When asked to identify which languages[2] they could speak 'well enough to take part in a conversation', 16% of Irish respondents claimed this level of ability in French. The other languages identified were German (9%), Spanish (2%) and Italian (1%). Differences in both the questions used and the age composition of the samples, make exact comparisons unreliable. But if it is accepted that the Eurobarometer question broadly corresponds to three ability levels - 'parts of conversations', 'most conversations' and 'native speaker' - in the ITÉ survey, and that the EU figures should be slightly higher as school going age-groups were included, then it would appear that the two estimates are roughly similar.

Of course, comparisons within the EU samples do not pose these technical problems, but they do raise others. In the 1995 Eurobarometer survey, the average percentage who are able to converse in French is 15%, while that for German and Spanish is 9% and 5% respectively. On this measure, competence in European languages in Ireland is about average for the EU in the case of French and slightly below average in the case of the other two languages. However, simple comparisons have to be qualified because (a) in the fifteen EU member countries overall, the mostly commonly known foreign language is English (33%) and (b) the distribution of persons with abilities in other languages is quite uneven geographically. Not surprisingly, countries adjacent to France (Belgium, Luxembourg, UK) and Germany (Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden) have higher proportions competent in the languages of their near neighbour.

The situation is also changing rapidly. The 1997 Eurobarometer survey was a special survey of those aged 15-24 years old (average sample size was 600 in each member state). The results showed that those in the younger age groups are more likely to speak foreign languages than the general population in the 1995 survey, but with a distinct bias towards English. The averages in the 15-24 year-old age-group in 1997 claiming conversational competence were English (54%), French (20%), German (11%) and Spanish (9%). The corresponding figures for young people in Ireland (excluding English) were French (44%), German (16%) and Spanish (3%). The proportion in the Irish sample reporting no knowledge of any foreign language was identical with the European average (29%). On this basis it would appear that Ireland has significantly improved its rating *vis-à-vis* European averages. It is now above average in French and German and below it only in the case of Spanish. The figures for the UK, on the other hand, show very little difference between the older and younger samples.

Foreign Language Acquisition

Very few respondents in the ITÉ survey learned a European language in the home. For the vast majority, acquiring knowledge of a European language takes place either solely or initially at school. The substantial improvement in the achievement levels of younger age-groups in Ireland, noted above, is almost entirely due to the growth in the increasing proportion who study languages at second and third level education. We don't have comprehensive figures for the numbers of third-level students who studied languages, but the figures for Leaving Certificate students give a good indication of the trends. *(Table 3, see page 68)*

Although the increases in the proportion of the cohort studying French are substantial, it is actually closely in line with the increase in second-level participation rates generally. However, the very recent - and relatively large - upsurge in the proportions of students selecting German at this level cannot be explained by reference to changes in overall participation rates. Instead, it would appear to be related to effective promotion initiatives from a number of quarters, including German teachers and business and industrial groups, (see Sagarra, 1989). Not only are the numbers studying German increasing, but the numbers studying French at this level seem to be declining.

As we said, we were unable to obtain figures for all language students in third level institutions. However, in the seven university colleges in the academic year 1996/7, some 7,000 students were enrolled in degree level language courses. Of these, 42% were studying French, 29% German, 15% Spanish and 14% other

languages, which included Italian, Russian and Japanese. The different distribution of students across languages - compared to the second-level pattern - reflects the different process of language subject selection which operates.

Thus, respondents in the ITÉ survey had a number of educational tracks available to them. Broadly speaking, levels of proficiency at the time of the survey were related to the number of years they had spent studying the subject. *(Table 4, see page 68)*

The first row in Table 4 (page 68) includes respondents who completed education at primary school, respondents who attended post-primary and left without qualifications and a small number of respondents who attended junior cycle and/or senior cycle but did not study a modern European language. The last row, on the other hand includes all respondents who studied languages to Leaving Certificate level, *and* who also followed some type of third-level programme, *but* not necessarily a language one. It was not possible, with the survey data, to separately classify those who followed a third-level language course, but it seems reasonable to conclude that they would report even higher levels of proficiency, while those who took a course without a language subject would reveal a pattern closer to the Leaving Certifcate row.

This is also the European pattern. The EU 1995 survey referred to above found that those who completed their education at an early stage were considerably less likely to speak a foreign language than those with higher levels of education. *(Table 5, see page 69)*

The findings in relation to the four most widely spoken foreign languages in the EU are shown in the above table. As the level of education increases, so does the proportion of respondents who claimed to be competent in a foreign language.

Language Attrition and Intergenerational Variation

As might be expected, from the evidence presented in Table 3 (page 68), there is likely to be a considerable variation by age in the percentages of respondents with a speaking ability in a foreign language. The following table presents the percentage of high and moderate ability speakers in each age group, for each language. *(Table 6, see page 69)*

In the case of French, a much higher percentage of 18-24 year olds than any other age group rated themselves as having high ability. Those who stated that they had a moderate level of ability are more evenly distributed across age groups, but the highest percentages are drawn from the two youngest age groups. In relation to German and other languages, respondents are more evenly distributed across age groups at both levels of ability. This may be indicative of a much more selective approach to the study of these langauges. That is, while French is studied on a more universal basis, German is studied more intensively by a smaller number of persons who have, perhaps, quite specific vocational motives.

There is, nonetheless, a general pattern of higher ratios of speakers in the younger cohorts. Two rather different processes appear to be operating here. First, the table reveals the rising participation rates of young people in education. But secondly, there is likely to be an element of attrition in ability levels across the life-cycle. A survey conducted at one point in time cannot, of course, isolate the relative contribution of these two processes. But some indication of the possibility of attrition can be seen if we examine the age distribution of all those who studied French at least to Leaving Certificate level. *(Table 7, see page 70)*

Again, while the efficiency with which spoken French is taught in the schools may have improved in recent years, a comparison of any two adjacent rows - over which such factors are minimised - suggests an attrition process.

Social Class

Access to education is highly related to class position. This factor limits the numbers who could achieve a high level of academic attainment in European languages and thereby introduces and sustains a distinct class dimension in the social distribution of speakers of those languages.

(*Note:* The Social Class scale used in the following analysis was adopted by the CSO in the 1986 and subsequent censuses).

Social Class 1:
Higher professional/managerial, proprietors, farmers (200 acres +)
Social Class 2:
Lower professional/managerial, proprietors, farmers (100-199 acres)
Social Class 3:
Other non-manual and farmers owning 50-99 acres
Social Class 4:
Skilled manual and farmers owning 30-49 acres
Social Class 5:
Semi-skilled manual and farmers owning less than 30 acres
Social Class 6:
Unskilled manual

The data presented in Table 8 (page 70) clearly indicates that competence in European languages is concentrated to a large extent in the two highest social classes. In each of these classes, roughly 10% of respondents claimed high ability in French, whereas the proportion falls to 3% and under in the other social classes. While respondents with moderate ability in a European language are more evenly distributed across social classes, those belonging to the two highest classes again constitute the majority in the case of each language. *(Table 8, see page 70)*

In the case of German, respondents with ability are drawn almost exclusively from social class 1, with figures of less than 1% for the other social classes. The percentage of respondents with high ability in another European language is greatest in social class 2.

Gender

Gender differences are also apparent in the distribution of competence in European languages. *(Table 9, see page 71)*

The clearest differences to emerge are in relation to French, which in fact account for most of the overall disparity between male and female ability in languages overall. At each ability level above the lowest, the percentage of females is higher. The situation is different with German and other languages. Here there is a near balance with, in fact, a slight weighting towards males in the case of German.

Leaving Certificate statistics suggest a slightly different picture. As seen in Table 10 below, it is clear that there was a disproportionate majority of female candidates in most subjects and on most occasions. In 1970, the proportion of girls who sat the Leaving Certificate examination in French was more than twice that of boys. By 1980, while the numbers of both males and females taking French had increased, the increase was greater in the case of males. This can be largely attributed to the decline of Latin and the substitution of a European language subject instead. In 1970, of the total number of boys who sat the Leaving Certificate, 62% were examined in Latin. The corresponding figure for 1980 was 6.5%. *(Table 10, see page 71)*

Between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of girls who took French continued to increase, while the proportion of boys decreased slightly. Of the total number of candidates in German, the gender balance had been heavily weighted towards females up to 1990, but this gap had closed substantially by 1996. The most recent figures show equal proportions of males and females taking Italian. The ratio of males to females taking Spanish has been consistent over time but the most recent figures show an increase in the proportion of males relative to females.

While the two sets of figures show the same relative pattern, the magnitude of the differences is greater in the case of the school statistics. This is primarily due to the fact that in the years when girls were most likely to study languages, the actual numbers studying for the Leaving Certificate were smaller. But there may be other factors operating to reduce the gender difference in adult years which require further study.

At the European level, findings of the Eurobarometer surveys are inconclusive in relation to the distribution of foreign language competence by gender. The survey of 15-24

year olds in 1997 showed that men were somewhat more likely than women to speak only their mother tongue - 30.8% of men as opposed to 26.5% of women. The difference was largely accounted for by the higher proportion of women who spoke French (23%) and English (56%). The corresponding figures for men were 16.9% and 51.4% respectively. However, a survey of the adult population in 1995 found that a higher percentage of men (36%) than women (31%) spoke English. Given the dominant position of English as a foreign language throughout the EU, this indicates that in overall terms, men are slightly more likely to speak a foreign language.

Region

There are a number of factors which suggest that competence in European languages would show regional variations. Subject provision in Irish schools has been found to vary throughout the state (Hannan et al, 1983). The findings in relation to language provision indicated that schools located in urban areas were more likely to provide languages than those situated in rural areas. The impact of internal migration is also relevant. Due to the greater range of employment opportunities and the location of third level institutions, migration to cities and large towns is likely to include a high percentage of people who wish to acquire educational qualifications and subsequently, to find relevant employment.

The survey findings bear this out. The proportion of respondents with knowledge of a European language is lowest in the countryside and in towns with populations of less than one thousand. In the case of each language, there is an overrepresentation of those with high levels of competence in the Dublin area.

Residence Abroad

Respondents who had spent a short period of time abroad indicate a slightly higher likelihood to report high levels of ability in continental languages. *(Table 11, see page 71)*

However, as those with third level education were also more likely than other respondents to have lived abroad for a short period of time, we cannot confidently conclude from the data collected in this survey that time spent abroad makes an independent contribution to language learning.

Conclusions

The questions which were included in the 1993 survey were a preliminary attempt to investigate this topic. Because the number of questions had to be restricted, several issues of importance were either not investigated at all or examined too briefly. Among these the following, in particular, may be noted. More detailed information is needed about the exact academic level reached by respondents in language subjects, not only at second or third-level, but also subsequently in adult education. Secondly, it would be useful to know more about the extent to which knowledge of foreign languages was actively used in work and when abroad or passively in reading or watching foreign language television programmes and films. These are matters which will have to be left to subsequent research studies.

Nonetheless, the survey data as it stands helps to amplify and extend the information available from other sources - primarily examination statistics and EU surveys. The series of Eurobarometer surveys are now a useful source of comparative data. They suggest that while the average level of proficiency in foreign languages among Irish adults was no more than average or slightly below average, the situation among young adults shows a considerable improvement. This appears due to two processes. The 'knock-on' effects of the big increases in second-level school participation rates which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, and the growth in the proportion of students and schools in non-English speaking member-states to select English as their primary foreign language. This second factor had the effect of arresting or depressing the trends in the proportions learning languages other than English in Europe while, for different reasons, the opposite was happening in Ireland.

The Eurobarometer question is, however, a simple measure of ability. Comparing the replies of the two Irish samples (ITÉ, 1993 & Eurobarometer, 1995) suggests that the EU measure combines a number of ability levels,

and a more searching enquiry in all member-states might show Irish achievement levels in a different light.

While the current data on proficiency levels remains unsatisfactory, it does indicate that the goal of proficiency in two community languages is some way off. However, if the overall levels of achievement are themselves disappointing, the social distribution of those with these levels of self-reported ability is a further cause of concern. The EU White Paper, cited earlier, also notes the over representation of foreign language proficiency among social elites. The ITÉ survey shows quite clearly that this is true of Ireland also. However, while public attitudes - which will be examined in the final report - are quite supportive of a policy to teach foreign languages in the schools, this support rests on a perception that a knowledge of foreign languages is economically beneficial. This vocational element can be seen operating in language subject selection at second and third-level. This suggests that language learning will be influenced more by changes in national and international labour markets than by education policy *per se*.

Notes

[1] A more detailed report is in preparation. It will more fully discuss the issues raised here, as well as address other related topics and public attitudes to the teaching of foreign languages in the schools.

[2] The languages listed on the questionnaire were the official languages of the EU as well as Russian, Arabic, japanese and Chinese. Of the non-EU languages, 1% of European Union citizens stated that they could speak Russian. For each of the other three languages, the proportion was less thatn 1%.

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Table 1:
Ability to speak a European language, 1993

Ability Level	French	German	Other
	%	%	%
None	59	85	87
The Odd Word	14	8	6
Few Simple sentences	13	3	3
Parts of conversations	10	2	2
Most conversations	3	1	2
Native speaker ability	1	1	-
Total	100	100	100

Table 2:
Speakers with a 'high' level of ability in one or more languages

	%
French only	53
German only	13
Other language only	13
French + German	4
French + Other Language	9
German + Other Language	2
French + German + Other	6
Total	100

Note: 'High' ability combines the top two points of the scale in Table 1.

Table 3:
Leaving Certificate candidates in European languages, as a percentage of the cohort of 17 year olds , 1965-1996 (selected years)

Year	Total no. in Cohort*	French	German	Italian	Spanish
		%	%	%	%
1965	55400	7.7	.3	.2	.9
1975	58160	27.0	1.4	.3	3.9
1980	65000	35.0	2.5	.2	2.0
1984	66600	41.8	2.4	.1	1.5
1990	67700	51.1	4.7	.1	1.6
1996	70000	45.0	14.3	.2	1.9

Department of Education Statistical Reports
*estimate of cohort of 17 year olds, based on tables on participation rates in education in the above reports

Table 4:
Ability[3] in a Foreign Language by Educational Level

	None	Low	Moderate	High
No languages at school*	88	7	5	-
Inter./Junior Cert. only	40	31	27	1
Leaving Cert. only	12	19	63	6
Third Level	6	6	60	27

[3] The original six-point ability scale has been collapsed to three in this and some other tables which follow. 'High' combines the top two points, 'Moderate' the middle two, and 'Low' the bottom two.

Table 5:
Foreign Languages Spoken, by age at which education was completed

	English	French	German	Spanish
	%	%	%	%
EU average	33	15	9	5
Age of finishing full time education				
Less than 16	9	6	4	3
16-19	33	15	9	4
20+	57	25	17	8
Still studying	65	27	14	10

Source: Eurobarometer no. 44, 1995

Table 6:
Percentage of each age-group claiming high or moderate levels of speaking ability in European Languages

Age	French		German		Other		N
	High	Mod.	High	Mod.	High	Mod.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
18-24	14.7	39.4	1.8	8.3	2.8	9.2	109
25-34	5.1	38.5	2.0	4.6	0.5	6.1	195
35-44	2.3	27.0	1.4	5.5	1.8	4.5	222
45-54	0.6	13.1	0.6	6.6	0.6	4.8	168
55-64	1.8	8.1	0.9	4.5	0.9	5.4	111
65+	2.4	8.8	1.2	1.8	2.3	3.5	171
Average	4.0	23.0	2.0	5.0	2.0	5.0	976

Table 7:
Speaking ability in French in 1993 of Respondents who studied it to Leaving Certificate, by age.

Age	Ability			
	None	Low	Moderate	High
	%	%	%	%
18-24	5	5	62	27
25-34	9	12	68	11
35-44	13	19	62	6
45-54	20	25	50	5
55-64	18	18	54	9

Table 8:
Ability to speak European languages, by social class

		French		German		Other	
	Total	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
	(N)	%	%	%	%	%	%
Social Class 1	114	47.4	10.5	9.6	6.1	12.3	1.8
Social Class 2	121	34.7	10.7	9.1	0.8	7.4	5.0
Social Class 3	216	25.0	3.2	6.5	0.5	3.7	1.4
Social Class 4	248	15.3	0.8	2.4	0.8	4.4	1.2
Social Class 5	142	18.3	-	2.8	0.7	4.9	0.7
Social Class 6	109	5.5	0.9	-	-	0.9	-

Table 9:
Ability to speak European languages, by gender

	French		German		Other	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
None	65.2	54.0	85.1	86.6	87.1	88.1
The Odd Word	12.3	14.7	8.1	7.7	5.9	5.2
Few simple sentences	10.1	16.2	3.2	2.7	3.0	3.1
Parts of conversations	9.3	10.4	2.2	1.9	2.8	1.7
Most conversations	2.8	3.9	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.9
Native speaker ability	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.2
Total (N)	494	482	494	482	494	482

Source: National Survey on languages, 1993

Table 10
Leaving Certificate 1970-1996: Males and females as a percentage of the total number of candidates in each language

	French		German		Italian		Spanish	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1970	28	72	28	72	19	81	36	63
1980	37	63	23	76	24	76	33	67
1990	38	62	29	71	42	58	32	68
1996	39	61	43	57	48	52	41	58

Source: Department of Education Statistical Reports

Table 11:
Percentage of respondents with 'high ability' by residence abroad

	French	German	Other European
Total sample	3.9	1.3	1.6
All respondents who had lived abroad	5.6	3.3	3.7
Respondents who had lived abroad for up to 5 years	7.9	5.0	5.9

Exploring the 'Other': Innovation and Research in Third-Level Language Education

Bill Richardson
School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies
Dublin City University

On the eve of the twenty-first century, it is useful to ask what direction third-level language education is likely to take in Ireland in the future. To do this, we can consider some of the innovations currently taking place and the ways in which research in language education is developing. Perhaps the best starting point is with an initial reflection on the aims and purposes of language education.

The Purpose of Language Education

'What is language education for? Typically, the answers to fundamental questions such as this one about the purpose and aims of any aspect of education range over a wide variety of possible areas which are perceived to benefit from the institutionalised teaching of the subject in question - areas which include the philosophical and the economic, the utilitarian and the academic. In the case of language education, we are likely to focus on issues such as 'contact with other cultures', 'international business', 'the European context', etc. as practical values which are served by the teaching of languages and related disciplines, and to include 'broadening visions', 'development of critical faculties' or 'exploring the literary and cultural heritage' as examples of less tangible, more idealistic, reasons for applying ourselves, and encouraging others to apply themselves, to the study of language-related subjects. All of these might be subsumed under the more general notion of 'exploring the other', i.e., developing competencies which contribute to a better understanding of, and facilitate interaction with, the otherness of people whose native language is not the same as our own. This view of the basic task of language education implies that what this branch of learning ultimately entails is a continual shifting of the linguistic and cultural parameters which guide our behaviour: in other words, what we may call 'new thinking' - or innovation - is at the core of what language education is all about, and is the essence of what we develop in the process of such education, no matter at what level it happens or in what context it may take place.

What this suggests is that language education is centrally concerned with 'learning to think differently'. This in turn entails both a 'knowing how' and a 'knowing about' - the competencies developed, in other words, include both practical competencies to do with the use of language, including speaking in order to achieve certain goals or translating written texts into appropriately-worded texts in a target language, and competencies which we could describe as more 'academic', i.e. those which are focused on knowing about another culture or knowing about the literature of the target language, or even understanding better the features of the language itself. In any of these areas, the insights we glean will be intimately bound up with the mind-set or psychology of people from a culture other than our own. Even if we can accept that the dividing line between one culture and another is ill-defined and that, within what we may think of as one and the same culture, we mark individuals off from one another on the basis of socio-cultural differences, the fact remains that it is specifically in the context of language education that the encounter with cultural difference is zoned in on. The agenda of this area of education is concerned in a special way with the matter of what makes groups of people different from one another, with how we adapt in order to overcome cultural barriers and with what makes one person's grasp of the world around us different from another's.

I wish to argue that all of this makes the case for a holistic, unified vision of language education. Such a vision would see a continuum between theory and practice, and between 'knowing how' and 'knowing about'. If the various aspects of language education are centrally concerned with this appropriation of 'otherness', then the divisions traditionally fostered and held dear by many need to be questioned and even undermined. The snooty exclusivity characteristic of some academic language departments, which holds that only culturally-orientated language study (and especially the study of literary texts) is to be valorised, is crying out for re-examination. And such re-examination needs to be carried out, not in a simplistic spirit of enthusiasm for the utilitarian acquisition of those language exponents required for the accomplishment of certain practical tasks, but in a spirit of mature appreciation of the merits of *all* dimensions of language study.

I propose to examine this issue in relation, firstly, to the development in recent decades of innovative language courses, including courses in 'applied language studies', secondly, in relation to developments in technology, and, finally, in relation to the notion of interculturality and how it intersects with language education.

Shifting Paradigms

Placing foreign language education in Ireland on a sounder, more professional footing for the twenty-first century will entail more than just paying lip-service to areas of study beyond literature. There are, of course, two starting points for the academic involved in this area: on the one hand, there is the requirements of the students who arrive in our classes; on the other hand, there is an internal logic to the academic discipline to which we are dedicated. The former pushes us in the direction of 'relevance', understood as the business of focusing on those aspects of language study which students want, or need, to learn in order to be in a position to move about in the target culture. The latter - the logic of the discipline itself - translates into an imperative to discover more about a particular academic area and the desire to create new meanings and articulate new insights into how the world works. These two different emphases are potentially in conflict: concentrating solely on the former aim can bring great fulfilment of a certain type but is, ultimately, inadequate because it can imply not making any contribution to a lasting body of knowledge, i.e., not pushing the discipline forward. On the other hand, an exclusive dedication to research, with a consequent neglect of the needs of students, leads to the creation of the classic 'ivory tower' syndrome, and the consequent creation of an élite group self-indulgently devoted to the pursuit of arcane knowledge with, at best, an attitude of condescension towards those lesser mortals who reside outside that club (the latter group including, of course, the vast majority of hard-pressed tax-payers who underwrite the activity of academics in the first place).

This is not to deny that the tension between dedication to the needs of our students and commitment to research is an easy one to resolve. The balance of teaching and research which suits one person may not suit another. We can, of course, envisage a situation where certain colleagues concentrate mainly on research and others focus on teaching, but that type of scenario too often leads to a separation of staff into high-status researching academics, on the one hand, and low-grade (and relatively poorly paid) language teachers, on the other. This dilemma is not unique to language education and can pertain to any academic discipline, but it is probably a more significant problem in the area of languages than elsewhere, given the labour-intensive nature of much language teaching. The fact is that language learning takes time and entails paying special attention to issues of identity: learners acquiring another language are engaged in the process of altering their identities in a way which may well be unique. Coleman (1996: 17) summarises the situation in the following terms:

> 'The uniqueness of the discipline lies...in the psychological implications of foreign language study. Other university learning may remain at a cognitive level, but with languages the role of attitude and motivation are crucial to success, and relate to the individual's deepest identity. We all define ourselves socially in many ways - by sex,

> race, colour, class, and so on - but no identity is perhaps so profound as our membership of a language community... Most often it is language which mediates and interprets experience: culture in its broadest sense is inseparable from language...[I]t is the psychological leap that makes language learning unique as a process...'

Given this need for a major time commitment on the part of the language learner, there is a continual requirement that any courses provided be structured and delivered to a high standard of quality. In third-level institutions, two basic approaches are available for answering this need: colleges can opt to create separate 'language centres' which complement the work of their traditional academic language departments, or they can attempt to integrate all language-related activities into a single department or school. The former option tends to reinforce the kind of division and status-distinction mentioned earlier, with language departments focusing mainly on traditional (high-status) research work, leaving the more applied, teaching-oriented activities in the hands of colleagues in the language centre. The division need not be an absolute one, nor does it necessarily entail disdain on the part of the language departments for the work of the language centre; and it certainly need not imply an absence of research work based in the language centre itself: examples abound of happy and successful arrangements of the sort where fruitful investigation has been carried on in the context of the language centre. It is clear, however, that the temptation to denigrate any language work which has an 'applied' focus exists; and, under pressure from university administrations, academic managers in language disciplines may opt for the kind of 'rationalisation' that allows for the creation of numerous low-level posts to handle the delivery of language courses in a language centre. But the second alternative - that of an integrated school of languages whose work encompasses both theoretical and applied activities - if handled incorrectly, can also lead to a *de facto* division between a minority of staff on secure, well-paid contracts and a proliferation of insecure, low-level posts aimed at ensuring delivery of a wide range of courses in a wide range of languages. The resultant dissatisfaction and low morale is helpful to nobody. When it operates well, however, the advantage of the latter approach is clear: it valorises a broad range of sensible academic activity relating to language study and teaching in general, including, of course, the study of literature.

In this, as in any other area of human activity, there are trends and fashions. The dominant paradigm in modern language departments for most of this century has revolved around a focus on the study of the literature of the language-communities concerned, presumably on the basis that great works of literature are the locus of the best use of language. In recent decades, however, not only has the focus shifted from a concentration on the canon of major authors to a wider, more democratic, concern with 'ephemeral' writings and less highbrow art forms (including, in particular, cinema) but a new-found dedication to interdisciplinarity has broadened the gamut of potential research activity even further, so that historical and cultural studies and theoretical and applied linguistics, translation studies and the study of natural language processing, have played an increasingly important role in terms of being grist to the mill of the language professional.

'Packaging' Language Education

Has literature had its day, then? One might have thought so if one had been observing the developments that were taking place in the course of the 1980s in this country. With the advent of degree programmes combining language study with business came a new emphasis on what came to be known as 'applied languages'. Here language was being seen as an essential communicative tool for the development of the international dimension of both public and private organisations. In particular, it became clear that advanced levels of linguistic competence were a key factor in ensuring the international success of commercial organisations (see Reeves 1985 for a review of reports pointing to this need). The dictum that you may buy in your own language but you sell in the language of the customer became the guiding principle for students who wished to study languages at third level but fulfil career ambitions in business at the same time. While

traditionally-minded academics scorned this trend, students voted with their feet and flocked to those institutions where courses of this type were on offer. The new university-level institutions (then called 'National Institutes of Higher Education') in Dublin and Limerick led the way with programmes offering the relevant combinations, and the CAO points required for entry into these courses reflected the demand among students. Courses were proposed and defended on the basis of 'relevance', especially relevance to the needs of industry, and syllabi were devised which reflected the kind of uses to which the various foreign languages might be put in professional contexts. At its most extreme, this followed the kind of programmatic formulation of syllabus content based on the precise articulation of 'learner needs', as exemplified in the approach of Munby (1978) or some of the work of the Council of Europe. Courses in Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) flourished and the momentum generated within the business context carried the approach over into other disciplines, including science and technology, with a consequent proliferation of applied courses and LSP courses in both the traditional universities and the institutes of technology (then 'regional technical colleges'). The result represented an important shift away from and beyond the traditional approach and an acknowledgement that graduates needed to be able to function competently in their contacts with the target language community from the moment they joined an organisation. Employment among language graduates who could offer an employer skills in another discipline along with their linguistic skills grew and continues to be strong today.

In the excitement, it seemed at times that literature was being forgotten. More recently, however, the mood has shifted again and it appears to be more fashionable now to denigrate applied language studies than to lament the élitism of literary studies. Academics who have themselves been trained in traditional universities are prone to re-discover the merits of a liberal education and can be found lauding the intellectual advantages of reading and commenting on Voltaire and Cervantes. The principal defect found, apparently, in courses geared towards the provision of communicative language skills is that they lack the scope for exploring ideas and that they fail to provide the philosophical depth which would enable students to achieve intellectual maturity. As with the original criticism of traditional courses, this charge has some validity: in any marriage between, say, a full diet of economically-oriented courses and a complete programme of language study, it is difficult to imagine that there would be no loss of intellectual depth somewhere and that, in an attempt to provide comprehensive coverage of learners' communicative requirements, some superficiality of treatment would not creep in. The lesson surely is that the main danger, the chief temptation to mediocrity, is the over-simplification of knowledge: reducing the understanding of social and cultural phenomena to the mere acquisition of some relevant 'facts' which appear to summarise whatever we need to know about the subject concerned. This, combined with a narrow, rule-based conception of behaviour, can lead to a reductionist and hopelessly inadequate appreciation of the complexities of lived experience. The unfortunate result of this can be groups of students who demand to be told, for example, *the* methodology for mounting a marketing campaign for product X and *the* set of reasons why humanism is superior to romanticism as a means of understanding the culture and society of Europe in the early twentieth century. The point about this kind of impoverished thinking, however, is that it is not, of course, confined to any particular type of language course, nor, indeed, to any particular discipline. Mediocrity, in other words, is not the exclusive province of language courses of an applied nature, as those who have marked literary essays from students on traditional arts courses will know. What we need to acknowledge, however, is that intellectual acuity is not confined to the study of cultural phenomena either. Both creativity and intellectual rigour are not just desirable, but essential qualities, whether one is applying one's mind to devising advertising campaigns or explaining the intricacies of the Wankel engine, just as they are in the context of a discussion of Faust.

Whether language education be packaged as 'traditional' and literary, or as 'relevant' and

offered in combination with other disciplines, the challenge is always to steer an intelligent middle course between applied and theoretical emphases, while achieving the depth of knowledge and range of vision which will inspire the student to learn and to investigate further. In this respect, it is worth bearing in mind that we are likely to see an increased emphasis in Irish third-level education on 'quality control' generally and assessment of academic performance in particular. This has been signalled already in the Universities Act 1997 and is in line with the kind of developments which have taken place in Britain and elsewhere in recent years. With this comes a new emphasis on the notion of the measurability of academic achievement: we may soon see the introduction of obligatory appraisal of teaching quality and quantitative assessment of research output. In this climate, questions about *what* one researches or teaches may be replaced by a concentration on *how much* of it one does. The danger then becomes one of reducing every aspect of the language educator's activity to only those dimensions of it that are measurable, thereby running the risk of failing to appreciate the less tangible, but valuable, contributions that individuals make in academic organisations, i.e., when what is important is not measurable, what is measurable becomes important. Or, at least, more important than it should be.

The issue of the assessment of the performance of academics is intimately bound up with the issue of evaluating student performance. The reason is again related to the *purposes* of language education: if what educators are about is the inculcation of intellectual curiosity, fostering autonomy in the learner and nurturing such qualities as openness to other cultures, cooperativeness and a genuinely entrepreneurial spirit, the question becomes one of knowing how to measure the attainment of such aims and the degree of success achieved in the cases of individual students. To this end, close attention will need to be paid not only to how we deliver the teaching required for the student to learn, but also how we create an environment where learning takes place in a more autonomous setting and, most importantly, how we evaluate the student at the end of the course.

Language and Technology

Ten years ago, Computer-Aided Language Learning (CALL) was in its infancy. During the 1990s, however, and paralleling the rapid expansion generally of information technology, the CALL sector experienced huge growth, with the production of a wide range of applications software aimed at developing language competency. These developments took place in a context where increased emphasis was being put on the notion of learner autonomy, and information technology was seen as a means of encouraging such autonomy, enabling learners to take more control of their learning. Coupled with this laudable aim, there was also the sense that some academic administrators had that the technology might provide a means of delivering a wide range of language courses in a variety of contexts at a relatively low cost, a vision not unconnected to the traditional bogey of 'computers replacing people', the people in this instance being language teachers. Although the latter motive was misplaced, the advances that have been made in the use of technology for enhancing language learning continue to point in the direction of greater autonomy for the learner.

It is true that the early attempts that were made at applying computer technology to language learning were less than impressive. Much of the software produced was devised on the basis of poor language pedagogy and was limited in scope, often representing language learning as merely the practice of grammatical exercises and the performance of structural drills. And, as with early IT generally, it seemed as if the computer was programming the user (to fulfil relatively trivial and tedious tasks) rather than having the user engage creatively with the technology. The future being predicted for CALL at that time was a vision replete with accessible, 'sophisticated' technical gadgets, from videodisks to voice synthesisers. Although it is the case that developments such as the latter are proving beneficial to the area of language learning, what was probably the most important key development was not predicted: this was the advent of remote electronic communication, especially in the form of email and the World Wide Web. Nowadays, of course, no self-

respecting language professional is without a Web address, and the potential for learning via these means is clearly enormous. But what still remains underdeveloped is the assistance and support that learners need in order to maximise this huge potential. As Mike Cooley has pointed out (RTÉ Radio, 28-1-99), the parallels with the British Library Lending Division are striking and illuminating: anyone in any country can obtain, from the BLLD, virtually any article from any learned source located anywhere on the planet, and thereby access the information which that article contains; the reality, however, is that very few people actually *do* access such material, as only a tiny fraction of the population makes use of the service. Needless to say, there is a qualitative difference between the instant access to data by electronic means and the relatively cumbersome process of acquiring a copy of a document from the British Library. Nonetheless, the point is well made: the fact that the information is out there and that we *can* get hold of it is not in itself going to change our lives; the quality of the interaction and the skills we apply to the task of searching, on the other hand, may well bring lasting benefits. Learning by electronic means entails a somewhat different set of skills from those required for other kinds of learning, but the basic characteristics desired of the learner are the same: they include openness of mind, curiosity, determination and the ability to discriminate between what is important and what is trivial, along with at least a modicum of good fortune and the availability of the material resources required to undertake the task. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that learning by electronic means will increase in the coming decades and we can confidently predict greatly increased usage of computer technology for language learning. What is not being suggested, though, is that we should envisage a situation where the computer is likely to replace language teachers themselves, although it may well be the case that teachers who know about computers will replace teachers who do *not* know about computers. But the scope for expansion in this area is truly phenomenal and, already, the repercussions of these developments are being felt in all areas of language education. Even in the study of literature and in cultural and historical studies, access to on-line databases can provide the user with anything from social statistics to banks of literary texts. In translation studies, concordancing tools can be used to compile and examine parallel texts (similar types of text in two or more languages) or to align and search Target Language and Source Language versions of translated text. The use of the computer has added new dimensions to the study of both general linguistics and the linguistics of individual languages, with the availability of computerised text corpora which facilitate the exploration of a wide range of lexical and grammatical features of language, leading both to a clearer understanding of how human languages are actually used (in both oral and written forms) and to a broadening of the definition of linguistic meaning itself. And in the acquisition of general or specialised linguistic competence, systems such as TopClass™ or Can8™ not only assist the learner to access relevant materials and perform appropriate tasks and exercises, but, more significantly, they facilitate the entire process of managing the learning itself, by allowing the user - the tutor or the learner himself or herself - to monitor progress, communicate via email and the Web, obtain feedback on performance and share ideas and opinions in chat-rooms even as they facilitate access by remote users who are collaborating on joint projects, etc.

Technology is changing our lifestyles generally; it is also ineluctably altering how we learn. In the context of language education, therefore, we can anticipate that technology will not just assist the process of teaching/learning and the undertaking of existing research efforts, but that it will also increasingly form the object of our research, with the exploration of how computers change the ways in which we learn and how we define what knowledge is.

Interculturality

This very technology which facilitates communication between disparate communities and individuals is itself responsible in large part for the phenomenon of globalisation, which in turn throws up the need to reflect on cultural difference. The negative aspects of globalisation have been frequently rehearsed, and the ominous sense of the domination of other cultures by a bland, media-centred Americanism has been

articulated often enough. But the one clear result of improved communication by telephone and computer - not to mention of the reducing cost of travel and shipping - is the increase in the quantity of contacts between people from different cultural environments. The dominance of Anglophone culture in the business and political spheres should not blind us to the fact that individuals from *all* cultures need to make an effort at crossing the cultural divide and that to do so is to encounter a surprising richness on the other side. Ironically, the academic discipline which is currently the one centred on these issues - intercultural communication - has been largely the preserve of monolingual, predominantly English-speaking, researchers and teachers, (as exemplified by texts such as Samovar & Porter, 1996). Thus, while there has been a laudable emphasis on examining the nature of cultural difference in terms of the contrasting habits and practices of different societies, this activity has been carried on through the medium of English, and there has been a dearth of attention to multilingualism, in either its theoretical or practical dimensions. Mike Kelly (1997: 4) is one of those who rightly decry this tendency, and who advocate the integration of intercultural communication and language teaching, precisely in order to

> '...reduce the tendency to see intercultural communication as a substitute for language learning.'

Whether language educators take up the challenge of incorporating a self-conscious reflection on interculturality as part of the content of their courses, or whether they limit themselves to a target-language focus with a narrow agenda centred on traditional objects of study may well depend on how they see their role, and how society at large views their role, in the twenty-first century. As Kelly points out:

> 'The real challenge to language teachers is...to adopt a vision of their social and political role. In the terminology of strategic management, this might be rephrased to ask what business are we in? Are we in the business of providing linguistic skills to individual learners? Are we in the business of delivering language programmes to corporate customers? Or are we in the business of building a communicative society? If we can raise our aspirations to this last possibility, we shall have not only a stronger sense of purpose, but also a clearer view of how we should confront the future. Language teaching has a crucial role to play in ensuring that communication in the emerging world community is fully multilingual and multicultural. But this aim will require us to broaden our perspectives and move towards a more intercultural practice of language teaching.'
>
> (Kelly, 1997: 6)

On this view of language education, the definition of culture must be wide enough to encompass both traditional conceptions of 'sophisticated' art and the broad spectrum of human experience surrounding both ourselves and the individuals we come into contact with, no matter what cultural group they may belong to. Embracing interculturality thus entails appropriating the notion that the intercultural operates on at least two intersecting axes: on the one hand, there is the space between the language community I come from and the community of my interlocutor; on the other hand, there is the dimension that goes from the private domain of my personal experience to the public sphere of encounters with other people. This latter dimension spans both my subjective construction of symbolic meanings on the individual level and the shared, social realities of the political and economic spheres. Located at various points on this axis are the study of a wide range of aesthetic, philosophical, socio-economic and political issues relating to the multiple cultures in which human beings move and find meanings. Culture, on this view of it, is, in the felicitous phrase of Rebecca Oxford (1994: 29), 'the dance of life of all humanity.'

What this suggests, then, is that the encounter with the 'other' which language education is focused on is both an opening out to the strangeness of the historical and geographical otherness of other cultures as traditionally understood and an exploration of the intimate otherness of the self. Within each one of us lies the capacity to think - and to *be* - in more than

one single way, in accordance with a whole range of different conceptualisations of what it means to be human. Our students in the coming decades will not thank us if we insist on placing restrictive limits on our vision of what life is about and of what it means to explore another culture; the task for those involved in language education will presumably be to continue to open all minds to the possibilities of difference.

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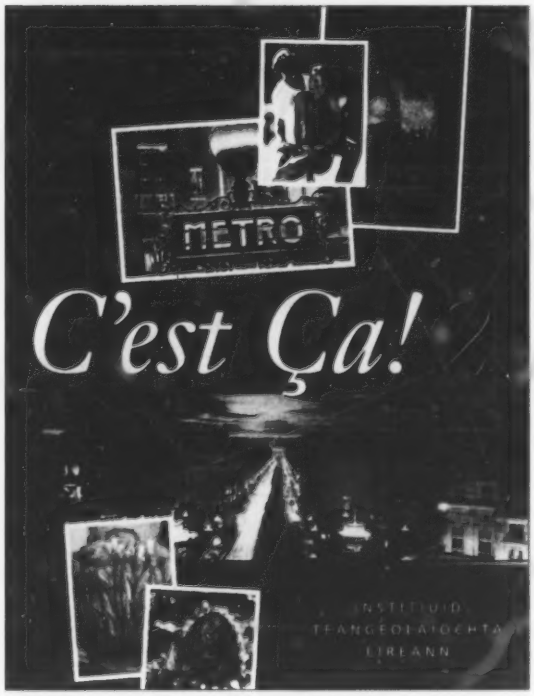

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Information and Communication Technologies and the Teaching and Learning of French in Irish Second-Level Schools

Josephine Dolan
Frédéric Royall
University of Limerick

This article considers the recent efforts undertaken by the Irish government to promote the use of information and communication technologies in second-level schools. The article considers, in particular, the implications for the teaching and learning of French of the recently established and innovative Schools IT 2000 Programme. The article also presents an analysis of some results of a research project which looked into the effects of the implementation of the Programme in Irish second-level schools.

Introduction

As technological developments now affect many aspects of our daily lives including communication, language teachers, in Ireland as elsewhere, who seek to apply the principles of second language acquisition and inter-cultural communication to classroom situations find themselves increasingly looking towards technological tools for support. Today's European language classroom is usually well-equipped in technologically-based teaching and learning aids. Tape recorders, television sets, and video recorders are relatively common. An increasing number of schools also provide technologically-based open-access facilities such as audio language laboratories, computer-assisted language laboratories and satellite television rooms. Few second-level language teachers in Ireland can, therefore, afford to by-pass the opportunities presented by developments in technology. Because of the role information and communication technologies (ICTs) play in the teaching and learning of foreign languages, many teachers are increasingly interested in using or learning how to use such technologically-enhanced language-learning aids in the classroom. However, mixed results with many technologically-based facilities have led to worries in some quarters that each new technological development requires a new methodological approach on the part of teachers and pupils, or at least a modification of current practice (see King & Vockell, 1991; Popham & Hughes, 1996). Jacquinot (1997), for one, argues that, 'la modernité technologique ne s'accompagne pas automatiquement d'une plus grande efficacité pédagogique; bien au contraire, les nouveaux dispositifs technologiques se sont souvent accompagnés d'une réactualisation de modèles pédagogiques dépassés.' Harris (1997: 13) outlines other aspects and argues that there is a presumption 'that learning to operate hardware and software is most of what is needed for the successful integration of technology into our classroom. How we successfully apply technology to educational situations is assumed to be obvious once the tools themselves are known...'

As ICTs undoubtedly contribute to change and improve the way we teach and learn (Ahmad *et al*, 1985; OECD/CERI, 1986), it is essential to consider the distinctive features any technology has to offer, how these are best exploited, and whether there is evidence of unequivocal pedagogical value for language learners (Anderson, 1988; Brierley & Kemble, 1991; Denooz, 1995; Garret, 1988; Janitza, 1984; Jones, 1986). Arguably, the most influential technological advance in recent times is the Internet which is changing the way information is made available, business is carried out and

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even how some people spend their leisure time. While it is true that the approaches, interests and goals of language teachers and learners may vary considerably from those of their colleagues in science, history, or geography, it can be argued that any and all information available on the Internet is of interest to language teachers and learners (Hare, 1998). It is against the background of current thinking on the use of ICTs in foreign language pedagogy that this article seeks to assess the contribution that the innovative *Schools IT 2000* Programme may have on the teaching and learning of French in Irish second-level schools.

The development of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme is a clear indication that the Irish Department of Education and Science is seeking to implement current pedagogical approaches (based loosely on the principles of the learning-centred and semi-autonomous language learning approaches) in Irish second-level schools. Questions must be raised, however, regarding the extent to which the Department of Education and Science is cognisant of the institutionalised constraints prevalent in Irish schools which inhibit innovative language learning methods and approaches and which may mitigate against the successful implementation of the Programme. Questions must also be raised as to whether the Department of Education and Science has fully assessed the difficulties which language teachers may face in adapting the required methodological and pedagogical strategies to ensure the successful implementation of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme in order to meet the pupils' (in our example, language learners') requirements. This article argues that in an Irish context, given the rather rigid second-level education system and the strong focus on preparing pupils for Leaving Certificate examinations, successful integration and implementation of Internet-based work (a suggested outcome of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme) in the foreign-language classroom can not be fully ensured. Firstly, we consider the role of ICTs in language learning and teaching. Secondly, we review recent government education policy with respect to the introduction of ICTs for foreign language teaching and learning. Thirdly, we present a broad outline of our research project and consider some of the results. Finally, we address the implications of our research in light of recent government initiatives.

The Internet for Teaching and Learning Foreign Languages

The Internet has had a major impact on communication over the past few years, yet it has not been without its critics. Given the absence of controls over what is disseminated to whom, particular criticism has been directed at the quality and value of accessible materials. However, complaints about the trivial nature of much of the information on the Internet are arguably of less concern to linguists than to others, for one could contend that anything written by native speakers for native speakers, regardless of subject matter, is authentic learning material of potential value to pupils. Authentic materials are widely available in various languages via the Internet which would never appear in any textbook, so that the target country and its real language is brought immediately into the learning environment without pupils leaving their desks (see Green, 1997; Hajnal *et al*, 1996). Such developments play a major role in democratising the learning process, giving all pupils equal access to the target country regardless of financial or personal circumstances.

There are many Internet applications (discussion groups, e-mail, Usenet, World Wide Web, etc.). For each Internet application many pedagogical advantages accrue: real communication, individualised and active learning, access to authentic documents, access to intercultural knowledge (Kornum, 1993), text, image, sound, and picture reconstruction (Aston, 1997), language acquisition (Wolff, 1993), development of motivation and of learner autonomy (Horsfall and Whitehead, 1996), etc. These applications may take very concrete forms in the foreign language class. For example, pupils may access material available on the Internet primarily for its content (as a basis for project or essay work) or for its linguistic value (vocabulary acquisiton, grammar exercises, text analysis, concordancing, specialist vocabulary); they may avail of language-learning exercises with built-in on-line help or discuss linguistic and cultural

issues with e-mail correspondents in the target country; or they may choose to develop oral comprehension by accessing real-time audio or video links; etc. (see also Conacher & Royall, 1998; Gaspard, 1998; Sangster, 1995).

Whatever use is made of the Internet, one of the key principles underpinning such use is that of learner autonomy (Esch, 1994; Little, 1989). Autonomous learners are those placed in the position to identify what they wish to learn, how and when that learning will take place, and how they will monitor the success of their learning process. Arguably, autonomous learners will prove more successful than their less autonomous counterparts, as they can transfer such learning skills and strategies confidently to a wide range of new situations (Portine, 1998). Autonomous learning is, however, something which most pupils need to learn explicitly (Conacher and Royall, 1996). The environment within which learning takes place also impacts upon, supports or restricts, that autonomy, so that within secondary schools contexts, for example, institutional regulations on curriculum and assessment may confine pupils considerably. We will come back to this point later in the article. The success of autonomous learning is also affected by factors such as learner types and attitudes towards the learning process as 'syllabus-bound'/'syllabus-free' learners (more or less happy to follow a specific pre- and externally determined learning path) (Wilson, 1981) or as 'field dependent/independent' learners (preferring or not a step-by-step approach to learning) (Wilson, 1981; Dickinson, 1987). Pupils have different motivations for learning and different goals which affect their attitude towards, and in turn their success within, the learning process (Alatis & De Marco, 1981). Wolff (1993) develops on the proposition that learners learn differently and that learning a second language is a creative process. Furthermore, he points out that learners must not only learn a language but must also learn how to learn (see also Dickinson, 1987; Little, 1991; Rubin & Thompson, 1994), thereby acquiring communicative competence, which includes acquiring structural knowledge of the language and developing individualised learning strategies. In such a learning framework, the roles of the teacher and learner are therefore subject to reassessment (see also Williams, 1995). Acknowledging the value of learner autonomy and the significance of affective factors requires the adoption of a learning-centred approach which encompasses both how individual pupils learn now and how we, as teachers, would wish them to learn in the future (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). The pedagogical framework based on learner autonomy and a learning-centred approach is particularly relevant in circumstances of technology-enhanced learning environments. The pedagogical framework requires educators, language teachers, and learners to evaluate carefully any new technological development, such as the Internet, if it is to make a successful contribution to the learning process (Gaspard, 1998; Horsfall & Whitehead, 1996).

With regard to the introduction of ICTs and computer-based applications such as the Internet in the classroom, Ireland has fared no better or worse than its neighbours. A study commissioned in the late 1980s by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (1989: 19-29) found that countries such as Australia, England, France, and the USA had been slow to integrate the use of ICTs in secondary schools. Many reasons contributed to this state of affairs (lack of computers, support, information, teacher training programmes, etc.). Since the beginning of the 1990s the situation has changed considerably. For example, in the case of England and Wales, the Department of Education established a list of recommendations to improve the dissemination and training in ICTs, many of which have since been adopted (DES, 1989; DES, 1990), and many government-subsidised projects now exist such as the Computers in Teaching Initiative, the Information Technology and Modern Foreign Languages Programme, and the Technology-enhanced Language Learning Project. France launched an ambitious programme (EDUCNET) in 1998 to develop ICTs at all levels of education. The USA launched its Technology Literacy Challenge in 1996 and the main programme of the European Union (Learning in the Information Society) was also launched in 1996. Consequently, many information technology programmes are

currently being developed, although it is worth noting that the financial and human resources required for successful implementation of such programmes are considerable (Cajkler, 1993).

In Ireland, the introduction of computers in secondary schools made limited inroads during the 1980s. The government has since strongly supported measures to remedy this by ensuring the training in ICTs of many pupils from a number of discrete disciplines (NCCA, 1993). The 1992 Green Paper on Education describes the role of ICTs in the following way: 'it is increasingly important that a basic appreciation and understanding of the modern information and communication technologies is fostered in young people, from their early years in school up to the completion of their education' (Ireland, 1992: 134). Three years later, however, there is a curious lack of reference to ICTs in the White Paper on Education, except through a brief expression of the desire that pupils should be introduced to the principles of science and technology (Ireland, 1995: 48-49).

As noted above, the use of computers in language classes in Ireland largely followed the implementation phases established elsewhere. Teachers in Ireland who sought to introduce computers in the language classroom also followed theoretical developments from around the world. For example, up to the beginning of the 1990s the various theories and approaches of the pedagogical applications of the computer for language learning focused on individualised learning. Whether derived from the pragmatic precepts based on Skinner (1938) of the 1950s and 1960s (word for word comparisons, for example) or from the more behaviourist and some constructivist precepts of the 1970s and 1980s (drill and practice such as grammar exercises, later data banks for information gathering and, more recently, multimedia techniques and hypermedia and hypertext methods), the approaches largely supported the view that learners build their own understanding. In recent years, these types of approaches have been heavily criticised for not promoting learner creativity for, as Jones and Mercer (1993: 20-25) suggest, learning may appear to be an individual and solitary activity but, in practice, almost all learning is a social experience:

> 'success or failure in the various learning tasks can be at least attributed to the effectiveness of the teaching you received. The weakness of individualistic models of learning is that they don't take proper account of the social quality of most learning. Their psychological models of the learning process only really deal with the thoughts and activities of one individual. This kind of social perspective leads to the view that what is going on in successful classrooms is not best described as 'learning', but rather as 'teaching and learning'.
>
> (Jones and Mercer, 1993: 20)

In this sense, current pedagogical approaches consider the computer in the language classroom as a means by which to reorganise interactions amongst people. Learners may, thereby, create a new learning environment, which is individualised but yet well set within a social and communicative framework.

In recent years, however, Denooz (1995) and Garret (1991) have raised important questions with respect to the pedagogical merits of many technologically-based language learning and teaching aids. Denooz considers that many such aids are ill-conceived, insufficiently tested, and methodologically unsound. Garret asks if computers can help learners to learn and communicate in a foreign language. She maintains that it is impossible to answer the question because research carried out over the past few decades has not provided conclusive results and because the computer is only a means by which, or an environment in which, various methods, approaches or pedagogical philosophies may be used. According to Garret (1995: 75), teachers may be better advised to ask the following questions if they wish to use ICTs (or, indeed for our purposes, computer-based applications such as the Internet) in a foreign language class: what kind of software integrated into what kind of syllabus; at what level of language learning; for what kind of

language learners is likely to be effective for what specific learning purposes?

Denooz and Garret both raise questions which are of relevance in these days of increasing focus on the technologically-based learning and teaching aids such as the Internet. Provided that certain basic pedagogical difficulties in the design and implementation phases are resolved at an early stage, as Denooz and Garret suggest, we feel that the use of ICTs, in general, and the Internet, in particular, may be of great benefit as a means or an environment through which to learn a foreign language as we shall see below (see also Conacher and Royall, 1998; Fisher, 1993). We now turn to recent proposals on the Irish scene.

Irish Government Education Policy and the Irish Education System

In October 1997, the Department of Education and Science (DES) launched its *Schools IT 2000* Programme. The Programme was initiated in order to attain a number of economic, political and pedagogical goals. According to the DES policy document,

> 'the need to integrate technology into teaching and learning right across the curriculum is a major national challenge that must be met in the interests of Ireland's future economic well-being ... knowledge and familiarity with new technologies will be an important dimension of employability in the information society.'
>
> (Department of Education & Science, 1998a)

For the purposes of this article, however, the pedagogical reasons for such a programme are by far of greatest interest. The Department's policy document states the following with regard to the pedagogical reasons for adopting ICTs:

> 'ICTs can improve the quality of the educational experience by providing rich, exciting and motivating environments for learning... [Numerous studies refer to]... the opportunities which ICTs present to encourage the development of creativity, imagination and self-expression.'
>
> (Department of Education & Science', 1998b)

In order to enable pupils at first and second-levels to experience such learning environments, the DES has set ambitious targets to be completed by the end of year 2001 under the auspices of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme. A primary aim of the Programme is to establish a permanent infrastructure of 60,000 school-based multimedia computer systems connected to the Internet. The Department has been greatly aided in this initiative by a major investment of £10 million by Telecom Eireann in the provision of (at least) one multimedia computer with Internet connection in every Irish school. In partnership with the National Centre for Technology in Education, the DES has adopted an approach to the implementation of the Programme which involves three major initiatives: Technology Integration, Teaching Skills, and Schools Support. The initiatives seek to address some of the needs and problems which have been identified internationally as significant factors in the integration of ICTs into schools. As the infrastructure is being set up in schools, the DES proposes to train second-level teachers in ICTs, arguably the most important aspect of technology integration. For example, Gardner (1995: 1) argues that, 'if any nation's teachers [are] not properly trained to exploit the technology in their teaching then, clearly, progress [can] not be guaranteed.' Grandbastien (1995) also looks favourably on teacher training in ICTs. He notes that courses of this type enable teachers to become familiar with many basic computer-based applications such as spreadsheets, database systems and the Internet.

The *Schools IT 2000* Programme has already initiated phases I and II courses of the voluntary-based teacher-training programme during the summer of 1998. Though not subject specific, the courses did focus on the development of different skills levels for primary and secondary teachers. The successful transfer of the skills acquired during these courses has not yet been the subject of follow-up research, although assessment of these courses must bear in mind Harris' comment, cited above, of the importance of applying successfully technology to educational

situations. The *Schools IT 2000* Programme also envisages a 'training continuum' for teachers which will enable them to progress from being 'novice' users to 'expert' users. Once the teachers have become 'expert' users of ICTs the results of the School Integration Project[1] may prove useful to teachers to apply their new found technological knowledge to their core subject (such as French). Subject specific training may prove to be necessary to enable teachers to promote the concepts of autonomous and semi-autonomous learning as alluded to in the French programmes description for second-level, and which the use of ICTs and especially the Internet allow. Clearly then, the question of teacher training is of capital importance in the introduction of ICTs into schools. However, as we shall see below, such training, while essential, may not in itself be enough to overcome the constraints of the current examination/curriculum structure. The Irish secondary school system is dominated by two examinations, the Junior Certificate and the Leaving Certificate. Their importance can be indicated by the huge numbers of students who sit both examinations. For example, in 1998 the number of students who sat the Junior Certificate examination was 66,100, 64,154 sat the Leaving Certificate examination. Of these candidates 45,811 (69%) took French as part of their Junior Certificate examination and 37,085 (58%) took French as part of the Leaving Certificate examination (DES, 1999).

The programmes of French at second-level (Leaving Certificate Programme - LCP, Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme - LCVP, and Leaving Certificate Applied Programme - LCAP) are broadly based on the communicative approach to language teaching, although cognisance is taken of the fact that a purely communicative approach may have its limitations in terms of the learning of grammar (see NCCA, 1995a). Teachers are encouraged to make use of the target language and to use authentic materials in the classroom. A LCAP document suggests that, 'a broadly communicative approach based on optimum use of the target language and authentic materials is recommended' (NCCA, 1995b: 3). The programmes of French at Senior Level also take cognisance of the fact that learner autonomy is to be encouraged and promoted. The Leaving Certificate French syllabus states that, 'many of the Performance Targets in the Language Awareness section of the syllabus are also aimed at promoting learner autonomy and enhancing learners' chances of success by equipping them with the skills to find their own way.' (NCCA, 1995c: 3)

It is our view that the guidelines and programmes of the Leaving Certificate programmes provide ample scope for the introduction of ICTs (and computer-based applications such as the Internet), as the Leaving Certificate programmes do allow for creativity and autonomous learning. It is arguable, however, that in spite of the DES investing heavily in the promotion of ICTs in schools, the current emphasis on the Leaving Certificate examinations may not allow the concepts of autonomous language learning and the learning centred approach to be encouraged successfully for the teaching and learning of French.

The current syllabus suggests a minimum of 180 hours for the teaching of the Leaving Certificate syllabus. Most schools timetable classes for thirty-five or forty minute periods. With a school year of 167 days it is questionable if teachers have a sufficient amount of time to teach the syllabus let alone to implement new and innovative methods of teaching it, as the timetable contains instructional processes. The emphasis placed on the examination which allows virtually no credit for work, such as project work done by the student (except the optional project for the oral examination) may also lead to difficulties in adapting new approaches to teaching and learning such as technologically-based applications including the Internet. For example, the White Paper on Education gives a clear indication of the importance attached to examinations: 'Assessment and the uses to which it is put, influence teaching methods' (Ireland, 1995: 95). The National Education Convention makes a similar point in an assessment of the Junior Certificate examination: 'the examination was also encouraging an emphasis on rote learning and a teacher centred approach to teaching and

learning in which a passive role was assigned to the student' (NEC, 1994: 73). We consider that the same argument is broadly applicable to the Leaving Certificate as its structures are only marginally different to those of the Junior Certificate. By focusing so exclusively on success in the examination, teachers are not encouraged to opt for more flexible teaching and/or learning methods. It can be argued, therefore, that even if the *Schools IT 2000* Programme provides the technological infrastructure and the training of teachers in ICTs, it will be of little use if the examination system continues in its present form. Let us now consider some views as expressed by teachers of French.

Some Survey Results

The research project was carried out in May/June and September 1998 by means of a postal survey to teachers of French in secondary schools in the counties of Clare, Tipperary and Limerick. The 86 schools targeted represent a cross section of Irish second-level schools both in terms of types of school and also in terms of geographical positions (i.e. single-sex, co-ed, voluntary, VEC, situated in large urban, small town, rural areas, etc). Twenty-five secondary schools replied, of which fourteen had an Internet connection. Though the situation may have changed moderately since the initial implementation phase of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year, our survey results do point to a considerable amount of initial unease at the introduction of ICTs in the classroom. We will conduct additional surveys in the coming years to assess the impact of the programme. Survey results point to the clear need for the training of teachers of French in the use of ICTs. Few of the teachers had received any training in the use of ICTs as part of their Higher Diploma in Education and, of those who had, six emphasised the limited nature of this training and one respondent stressed that there was no focus on Internet training in her recently acquired Higher Diploma in Education. Four teachers used the Internet as a resource tool from which they could obtain authentic texts to use with their classes, though none used the Internet in the classroom. The reasons for this lack of use include a feeling of incompetence and a lack of proficiency in the use of computers, as well as the more practical considerations of lack of time and resources. When asked about their attitudes to the Internet, teachers indicated a generally positive attitude although lack of knowledge and training and school timetabling problems (the use of the computer room by Transition Year and LCAP classes mainly) proved to be stumbling blocks (e.g. 'great', 'very positive', 'I'm sure there are endless possibilities', 'it sounds exciting', 'excellent resource'). Replies to the more specific question of how teachers viewed the Internet as a teaching tool indicate that just over 84% of the respondents had a positive attitude towards the use of the Internet in this way. In fact, a number of teachers made some concrete suggestions as to how the Internet could be used with a class. The majority of the respondents therefore felt that the Internet has the potential to be very useful, though principally as a resource tool. No teacher mentioned Internet applications such as e-mail or video-conferencing. While this may indicate that teachers of French do not view these tools as potentially useful for the teaching of French it is far more likely that these applications are not considered to be part of the Internet. Lack of training and competence in the use of ICTs may also account for this lacuna.

Many respondents were largely unaware or uninterested in the present role of the DES in the area of ICTs and language learning (e.g. 'don't know', 'none', 'provider of money and in-services'). When asked what role the DES should play in this area, the great majority felt that the DES should provide in-service and training in ICTs. The need for more resources was underlined a number of times. One respondent felt that training in ICTs was too vast and too expensive to take on (though the *Schools IT 2000* Programme indicates otherwise). Overall, the replies to this range of questions indicate the strong desire for adequate pre- and in-service training. This is not surprising in light of the training the respondents received at both pre- and in-service levels, nor in the light of the replies which pinpointed lack of knowledge and competency as stumbling blocks to the use of the ICTs.

What is more surprising is the number of respondents who indicated that they had not received information from the DES regarding the *Schools IT 2000* Programme. Only 20% of the respondents claimed to have received the information booklet from the Department. Others found information regarding the phases I and II courses accidentally, at a meeting of a teachers' association for French or in the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland newspaper ASTIR. Lack of information was a major issue as half of the respondents felt they could not comment on the effect of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme on their teaching, as they knew nothing about it. Others were more positive, but underlined the importance of improving resources and teacher training. Yet others indicated that change would depend on syllabus demands. On the whole, it would seem that teachers need to be kept well informed of the progress of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme, if it is to stand a chance of being even marginally successful.

Implications and Conclusions

Our survey results indicate that teachers of French are generally positive toward the use of the Internet as a teaching tool. In the near future all second-level schools in the Irish Republic will have an Internet connection as provided by the *Schools IT 2000* Programme, and consequently the Internet will also become readily accessible as a language teaching and learning tool. We argued above that the various French programmes at second-level promote many of the pedagogical outcomes associated with the use of the Internet for the teaching and learning of foreign languages (e.g. use of authentic texts, focus on intercultural communication, etc.). It would appear, therefore, that there is great scope from pedagogical and teachers' perspectives for the successful integration of ICTs such as the Internet in the teaching and learning of French at post-primary level. We feel, however, that despite such positive aspects, significant practical problems of implementation may arise due to the current emphasis on the examination at both Junior and Senior levels. The priorities placed on the examination encourages and reinforces a traditional, didactic style of teaching, far removed from the semi-autonomous and learning centred approaches which Internet use promotes. The Department of Education and Science seems aware of this situation in acknowledging that, 'the nature and level of technology use in any school will depend on the school's educational priorities.' (DES, 1998c). Arguably, the highest educational priority of the majority of schools is successful examination results. Major investment in ICTs and ambitious training programmes for same, while essential, will not in themselves encourage the use of ICTs (such as the Internet) among teachers of French if examination results may suffer or if these teachers are required to work within the constraints of an examination system which does little to promote, encourage, or enable a learning-centred approach and which does not allow for the development of learner autonomy.

The *Schools IT 2000* Programme is an extremely ambitious and positive initiative. In its inception much consideration has been given to addressing internationally identified problematic areas in the integration of ICTs into education. However, if the generally positive attitude of teachers of French toward the use of the Internet is to be capitalised upon and the full potential of the *Schools IT 2000* Programme realised, then the *Schools IT 2000* Programme (a square peg?) can not be driven into the rigid second-level education system (a round hole?). Satisfactory assessment structures must be provided and teachers kept adequately informed of training programmes and developments so that teachers and students can benefit fully from the knowledge and expertise gained in part as a result of this Programme.

Notes

[1] The Schools Integration Project is a pilot project which seeks to promote whole school development in relation to ICT integration and will involve at least 40 schools throughout the country.

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Tandem Learning: Autonomy and Partnership in Second Language Acquisition

Steve Walsh,
TEFL Centre,
The Queen's University of Belfast
Sylvie Campion,
The Language Centre,
University College, Cork

Abstract

This paper critically reports the findings of an experimental tandem learning programme at the Language Centre, University College, Cork during the 1996-97 academic year. Tandem learning is here understood to mean face-to-face, oral communication between native speakers of two different languages. The rationale behind this process is that both learners increase their awareness and understanding of language and language acquisition, enabling greater effectiveness and independence of learning. Tandem learning is intended to promote learner autonomy and encourage a genuinely communicative exchange which is both intercultural and interdisciplinary.

In the ten-week programme at University College, Cork, native speakers of two different languages met on a regular basis and exchanged 'conversation classes'. The learners worked independently and informally: there was no formal instruction and learners were largely left to their own devices as far as content and methodology were concerned. The exchange led learners to utilise their native expertise and intuitions about their first language naturally in order to facilitate the SLA process. In addition, learners were forced to critically examine their own learning strategies.

The Paper Falls into Four Parts:

1. *An overview of the principles and practices of tandem learning;*
2. *A critical review of the experiment, of its rationale and outcomes;*
3. *An analysis of the more prominent learner strategies observed;*
4. *A discussion of the contribution tandem learning can make to second language acquisition (SLA) research.*

Introduction

Tandem Learning - Principles and Practices

Learning a foreign language in tandem is normally a process which supplements formal (i.e. class-based) instruction. It is a type of autonomous learning in which two or more partners essentially exchange languages. The emphasis is both on learner autonomy and communication; two ingredients which are instantly recognisable as essential to any process of SLA. A third ingredient, equally central to the process of SLA is authenticity; both partners are engaged in a process of meaningful communication and mutual understanding, motivated by a commitment to learning rather than by externally imposed factors such as success in examinations.

Van Lier (1996) maintains that authenticity comprises both language awareness and learner autonomy; one of the aims of a tandem learning programme is to increase both awareness and autonomy through a process of mutual self-development. While in many ways tandem learning can be compared to other forms of 'extra-curricular activity' designed to complement programmes of instruction, it is no less valuable for its informality and spontaneity

Indeed, many of the participants in this programme maintained that it is precisely because of the emphasis on flexibility and spontaneity that tandem learning is such an attractive option.

According to Little

'Learning in tandem can be defined as a form of open learning, whereby two people with different native languages work together in pairs to learn more about one another' s character and culture, to help one another improve their language skills, and (...) to exchange additional knowledge - for example, about their professional life.' (1996: 10).

Little goes on to outline two important principles which are central to tandem learning.

1. The principle of reciprocity: each partner in a tandem programme must be prepared to contribute equally in both time and preparation. Each partner should be prepared to put in what they themselves expect to get out of the acquisition process; there can be no room for complacency, only mutual trust and shared expectations. In short, each partner must be as concerned for the success of their partner as they are for their own success.

2. The principle of learner autonomy. Partners are fully responsible for their own learning; the parameters of what to study, how and when are determined by each partner and then conveyed to their co-worker. While it might seem desirable to agree both content and methodology, this is unlikely to be a viable option as each partner will have a different learning background, needs and goals.

At first sight, these principles may appear rather daunting. The implication is that learners are sufficiently aware not only of their own needs and objectives, but that they are in a position to help their tandem partner fulfil *their* expectations. There is also, of course, a strong suggestion that learners should suddenly develop the knowledge and skills normally provided by a language teacher. And yet native speakers have a lot to offer each other. In the first place, they have that indefinable quality - intuition. They are in a unique position to tell their partner when something is correct, acceptable or not, even if they do not always immediately have ready-made explanations as to why. They have an instinctive grasp of the systems which make up their language: its syntax, lexis, phonology, semantics and discourse. Their own L1 acquisition process has given them more than just a grounding in the subject matter they are offering to their partner and the fact that they are students of a foreign language is likely to mean that they will at least have some ideas about how a language operates.

It is important to remember, too, that, while neither partner has normally had any formal teaching experience, adult learners have usually had years of experience (possibly 10 or more) as language learners. If they can draw on their experience as learners and apply it in their role of teacher, it is likely that they will be in a good position to offer an excellent service. Finally, as some of the early work on learner autonomy indicated (Holec, 1981), adult learners not only seek independence, they are capable of achieving it; this observation is potentially very powerful and for many involved in tandem learning programmes, it provides the driving-force which ensures both sustainability and success.

Tandem Learning at UCC: Rationale, Organisation and Outcomes

The notion of tandem learning was first launched by Sylvie Campion in October 1996. The suggestion was that we should organise a tandem learning programme in which the focus would be on oral communication, a kind of semi-structured conversation exchange programme, organised by and for the learners. There were a number of reasons for proposing such a programme:

a. Most students are under considerable time pressures. They have little time to devote to language learning in either formal or informal contexts and even less time to devote to speaking;
b. At the time, the open access facilities at UCC were quite limited, pending the
c. completion of a new language centre in 1998;

d. Face-to-face communication with a native speaker is an excellent way of sharing experiences, broadening horizons and increasing cultural awareness;
e. Performing a dual role, as both provider of L1 and recipient of L2, is a useful way to get students to think more carefully about SLA and the teaching/learning process;
f. It was intended that the programme would provide us (the teachers) with some insights into the extent to which our students were aware of different learning strategies, and at the same time suggest ways in which we could help them to become both more efficient (through learner training) and more independent.
g. Tandem learning is a useful undertaking both for students who have recently completed a year abroad and who are used to developing their linguistic competence outside the formal setting of a classroom, and for those students who are still completing their year abroad (under, for example, the ERASMUS programme).

There was some concern from teachers about the lack of student participation in regular, timetabled 'conversation classes', involving a a native *assistant(e)* or *Lekteur/Lektrice*. Our programme had to have 'face validity' - not over-prescriptive and sufficiently different from class-based language learning to convince students that it was worthwhile.

Discussions with students ensued over the next three months in order to ascertain the level of interest and deal with practicalities which included:

- Where would students meet?
- How often?
- How long should each session be?
- How to decide which language to use, when and for how long?
- How were errors to be addressed?
- What topics would be used to stimulate discussions?
- How could 'teaching tips' be incorporated into the programme?
- How would students assess their progress?
- How to deal with 'mis-matches'? (where one student could not work with another, for whatever reason)

A full meeting was held, involving approximately 20 ERASMUS students (representing Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Sweden and Russia). The aims of the programme were outlined and a number of guidelines given:

- ➢ Meetings should be held once a week and last approximately 90 minutes, 45 minutes in one language and 45 in the second;
- ➢ The main focus of the meetings was to be determined by the learners, in consultation with their partner;
- ➢ It was suggested that learners might like to help each other develop in the areas of pronunciation, vocabulary and oral fluency;
- ➢ Learners were advised to contact us if they were unable to continue with the programme or if their partner was regularly missing meetings;
- ➢ Emphasis was given to the genuine nature of the exchange: learners were encouraged to use one another as both a linguistic and cultural resource;
- ➢ Students self-selected according to languages on offer and their own level. Some counselling was needed to help students find appropriate partners.

Evaluation

(a) General Outcomes

Our experiment was evaluated using a simple questionnaire and informal, but a structured, interview which was also recorded. A total of 10 students took part in the evaluation, roughly half the total number who participated in the tandem learning programme. They were a combination of ERASMUS and local Irish students, aged 22-26, from three different European countries (Germany, Russia, Ireland), studying a variety of academic subjects, including law, modern languages, social work, European Studies. None of the students had ever taken part in a tandem learning programme; their levels ranged from absolute beginner to advanced.

The first part of the evaluation deals with three practical issues: reasons for taking part, benefits and disadvantages. (The numbers below r ... to the statement numbers on the questionnaire). The findings are summarised below.

1. The reasons I took part in the tandem learning programme are:

The predominant reasons given were to improve spoken L2 (100%) and to take part in genuine communication in L2 (100%). Only 50% of the sample attached importance to finding out about another country and its culture, while there was unanimous agreement concerning the objective of helping another student to improve their L2. Understanding the process of SLA was low on most student's list of priorities; 66% said that they were not interested.

2 The main benefits of the programme for me are:

Developing vocabulary seems to be the greatest benefit of the programme (100%), while improved fluency, accuracy and pronunciation were reported by a large number (85%) of respondents. In addition, the majority (85%) of the sample claimed to know more about their weaknesses in L2 and to make fewer errors by the end of the programme.

'It's a good way to study a language, good and relaxed way of learning.'

'I found it was very successful; I was away last year in Germany - we became friends.'

3. The main disadvantages of the programme for me are:

The comments on disadvantages were less clearly delineated. Only a minority (33%) of the sample reported practical problems such as organising times to meet on a regular basis. There were no reports of difficulties encountered in helping partners with SLA, nor of finding suitable topics for discussion.

These findings were borne out in some of the interview comments:

'We spoke about friends and everything, the news, college, problems. Maybe this is not possible for everyone, but this relaxed atmosphere helped me to learn and to think about the language. I think tandem is easier if you are doing something together, maybe go out together, go shopping together...then there will be no lack of conversation. The teaching character is important but it should be not too much in the foreground. The clue is to link teaching and fun.'

'There should be just a little more 'consulting points' on the road of tandem learning; there's a lot of flexibility to tandem learning which is good; there's plenty of space for initiative and exploration which is also very good.'

'I found it difficult to get my act together to take it seriously; in a way it's an advantage to have it in a relaxed informal atmosphere, but for myself I think it's better to learn in a not so informal and relaxed atmosphere; somebody telling you have to go.'

Evaluation:
(b) Learner Strategies

This part of our evaluation was designed to focus more closely on the ways in which students organised their learning and what strategies they used as both providers and recipients of the two languages.

4. As a recipient of L2, my time was spent mainly:

How did the respondents spend their time as recipients of L2? Almost without exception, each exchange lasted 45 minutes. The majority (66%) of the respondents referred to the fact that a good deal of time was spent asking questions about grammar and vocabulary, while, surprisingly only a minority (33%) spent their time asking about pronunciation. Answering questions and taking part in a discussion also figured highly (66%). Only half the group spent time finding out about their partner, again a surprisingly low figure.

5. *As a recipient of L2, I use the following learner strategies:*

Participants were asked to select from a list of 16 strategies (taken from Abraham and Vann's (1987) most frequently used learner strategies). Interestingly, the respondents demonstrated considerable homogeneity in their selection of strategies; they also used a surprisingly narrow range of unsophisticated strategies, including repetition (100%), making early use of newly learnt language (100%), asking for correct form (100%), verification (100%). Surprisingly little use was made of paraphrase (33%), repair strategies (15%), translation (50%). Again, interview comments support these findings and indicate a significant orientation towards error correction:

> 'repeating over and over the new words. You know, when you learn a new word, you just use it so I used them with my Irish flat-mates - if you don't use it, you won't learn it.'
>
> 'basically we let each other read and correct mistakes and then discuss mistakes.'
>
> 'Only the bad mistakes were corrected. I sometimes explained grammar by giving examples; I did not really refer to rules.'
>
> 'I corrected the pronunciation by repeating constantly. I pointed grammar mistakes out and corrected them, I would never use a grammar book.'

There was little mention of learner 'tricks': idiosyncratic devices designed to make the learning process run more smoothly and more efficiently:

> 'We had this little trick of writing maybe 20 words in my language and 20 words in the second language and then reading them for 10 times and then cover the L1 part and translate into L2 and then vice versa. It works brilliantly.'

6. *The respondents made a number of comments concerning their roles as providers of L2; these are summarised below:*

From the data, it appears that the exchanges were both learner- and language-centred: 85% of respondents said their time was spent mainly answering questions about L2, the same number dealt with grammar questions. All respondents said they spent a lot of time listening to their partner, 85% said they let their partner do most of the talking and helped them to formulate responses. It would appear that little difficulty was experienced in giving help with pronunciation (15%) and correcting errors (15%), while grammar explanations posed problems for the majority of the sample (85%).

> 'sometimes I found myself at a loss, not knowing the answer to a grammar question. We didn't have any major inhibitions or anything and that helps; I mean you could make a fool of yourself, say something and not feel bad which I do in French and a lot of people stopped coming to class because they feel stupid speaking broken French in front of a class. She had tolerance for me and I had tolerance for her.'
>
> 'if you're a good provider, you're a good recipient, basically. It's very wholesome. Maybe I can describe it as a holistic approach to the language-learning-teaching process; you should really look at both points - if you understand both ways, both provider and recipient, you understand the benefits of both.'

To summarise this section, we shall try to outline some of the lessons learnt from the tandem learning programme at UCC, before considering the contribution such a programme could make to SLA research.

One of the most difficult aspects of organising a tandem learning programme is striking an appropriate balance between promoting learner autonomy and providing the necessary back-up or framework in which the programme can operate. With hindsight, the writers feel that there should be more support throughout the programme; more regular meetings, more counselling (on request) and a much more thorough initial meeting in which participants are given practical suggestions on how to get the most out of their language exchange. (See Little

& Brammerts, 1996; Oxford, 1990; and Ellis & Sinclair, 1989). Specific learning strategies, which may appear rather abstract to the learner, need to be translated into practical techniques which have an immediate function.

A second 'lesson' is that the learners, both in their role as recipient and provider, need far more preparation before the exchange programme begins. In particular, as providers of L2, the participants need to be given a wider range of options in their choice of technique. One view of teaching/learning is that it is a decision-making process: the best decisions are made when there are several options. Our data reveal that the learners made use of a fairly restricted and unsophisticated range of teacher and learner strategies (including repetition, memorisation, correcting every error, translation into L1); by increasing the number of options, the whole SLA process would, we feel, be more effective.

Another, related, suggestion for further tandem learning programmes is that providers of L2 need to develop an autonomous approach to 'teaching', agreed in conjunction with their tandem partner and which allows plenty of scope for improvisation (see also Van Lier, 1996). From the data, it seems that most of the participants taught as they themselves had been taught; clearly, in an informal setting, different techniques should be used which approximate more closely to the preferred learning-style of the recipient.

The Contribution of Tandem Learning to SLA

There are a number of ways in which a tandem-learning programme might contribute to the current body of SLA research:

a. Contextual variability. The work of Ellis (1987) indicates that formal instruction benefits the development of a 'careful' style among learners; is there any evidence from a tandem learning programme to suggest that learners develop a more 'casual' style? If so, how does this style manifest itself and how important is it to the process of SLA as a whole?

b. Interaction and context. Much work has already been done on the role of classroom interaction in determining or influencing SLA (Long, 1983; Pica, 1987). Some researchers (Allwright, 1984) have identified a very strong link between interaction and SLA, while others (Cazden, 1988) maintain that there is no link. How does interaction influence acquisition when there are only two participants? How are topic choice and topic control negotiated? How is comprehensible input negotiated, if at all? What interaction strategies or tactics (Long, 1983) are open to participants?

c. Communication strategies. How are the channels of communication kept open? What can learners do to help each other acquire better or more appropriate strategies (clarification, repair, etc)? How do the communication strategies of two languages differ?

d. Strategic competence. What compensatory strategies do learners use when faced with learning/teaching difficulties? How do they overcome their problems? Are the problems related to type of task (Crookes, 1986) or are there other factors at work? Is there any evidence to suggest that partners in a tandem learning programme are better-placed to develop strategic competence than learners in a more formal setting?

e. Error correction. What is the effect of intensive error correction on uptake: the items that learners say they have learnt after a particular exchange? How are errors corrected and what is the contribution of error correction to SLA in a one-to-one exchange?

Conclusions

To summarise, tandem learning is a relatively easy and enjoyable way for learners to improve their proficiency in a foreign language. It can be organised at more or less any level with any group of learners, providing appropriate matches between learners can be identified. Tandem learning promotes genuine communication as participants engage in face-

to-face dialogue. It can help learners become more aware of specific learning strategies and contribute towards both learner training in general and autonomous learning. There is a clear need for training, and learners do need to be made aware of the range of options open to them in their capacity of L2 provider in order to avoid over-emphasis of (possibly inappropriate) teaching techniques.

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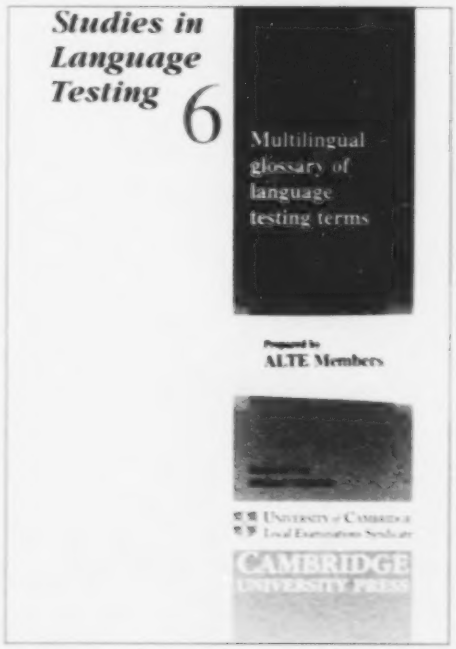

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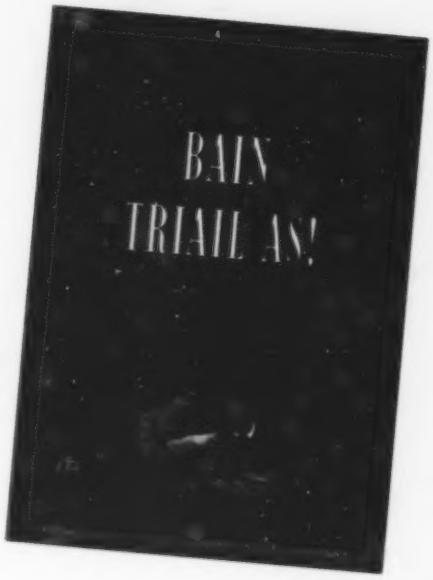

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Tá na foclóirí Gaeilge ag póru. Ó chuaigh an scéal amach go raibh Foclóir Póca na Roinne Oideachais ar an leabhar Gaeilge is mó díol riamh tá mionfhoclóir agus foclóir póca ar an margadh ag Collins, tá an mhionfhoclóir féin amuigh ag OUP, agus is beag foilsitheoir oideachasúil in Éirinn gan foclóir scoile aige chomh maith.

Leabhar beag ramhar é seo (8 x 11 cm, agus 3 cm ar tiús), ach é éadrom sásta ina dhiaidh sin agus clúdach deas marthanach bogphlaisteach air. Is maith an luach airgid é, agus an praghas tite ó £4.80 anseo ó tháinig sé amach ar dtús.

Tá 100,000 focal agus frásaí ann san iomlán, iad roinnte cothrom go leor idir an dá thaobh. Tá sé dírithe ar thosaitheoirí suas go dtí an meánleibhéal. Ní léir an bhfuil córas scolaíochta faoi leith - ná córas scolaíochta ar bith - i gceist ansin, ach is dócha go bhfuiltear ag súil le sciar de mhargadh na scoileanna dara leibhéal.

Bíonn foclóirí ag déanamh aithris ar a chéile, agus cad chuige nach mbeadh? Is é an stór focal céanna a bhíonn siad ag iarraidh a chuimsiú, nó réimse focal a bheadh riachtanach do chuspóir ar leith. Ach caithfidh siad a bheith difriúil le chéile ar bhealach éigin fosta. Níl sé i gceist agam foclóir seo Oxford a chur i gcomórtas leis na cinn eile, ach a rá gur bunúsaí go mór fada é ná Foclóir Póca (agus ná Foclóir Scoile, arb ionann é agus Foclóir Póca díomaite de mhéid an chló agus de dhornán mionleasuithe) agus é níos cóngaraí, mar sin, d'fhoclóirí Collins (arb ionann le chéile iad amach ó thoisí agus leagan amach). Agus má tá Gaeilge Uladh i dtreis i saothar Collins, tá iarracht den Mhuimhneachas ag roinnt le foclóir seo Oxford.

Ní mar an gcéanna an dá thaobh d'fhoclóir ach oiread. Is amhlaidh a bhíonn an Ghaeilge sa taobh Béarla ina aistriúcháin, agus an Ghaeilge sa taobh eile ina Gaeilge *authentique*. Is é sin le rá, is áis fhoghlamtha Gaeilge iad na foclóirí seo. Is beag amhras ach gurb é Foclóir Póca (agus foclóir Uí Dhónaill roimhe sin) príomhfhoinse an taoibh Gaeilge/Béarla d'an-chuid mionfhoclóirí, agus a bheag nó a mhór d'obair agus d'ionramháil déanta air. Is cosúil gurb iad na foilsitheoirí nó a gcuid eagarthóirí a sholáthraíonn na ceannfhocail don taobh Béarla/Gaeilge. Dá chomhartha sin, is saibhre agus is dúchasaí agus is iontaofa agus is cruinne an Ghaeilge sa taobh G/B ná an Ghaeilge sa taobh B/G. Agus is é a dhála sin ag mionfhoclóir seo Oxford é, agus cibé lochtanna atá air, is san obair nua is mó a fhaightear iad.

Ach oiread le mionfhoclóirí eile (seachas Foclóir Póca/Foclóir Scoile) níl fogharscríbhinn ag gabháil leis na ceannfhocail Ghaeilge, ach tá treoir fhuaimnithe i dtús an leabhair, agus buneolas ar na difríochtaí canúna. Ach ní dóigh liom gur cosúil an guta in slat le 'the **o** in slot' (lch vi), ní 'that' is ciall do 'ansin', agus is ionadh liom a léamh go bhfuaimnítear dh/gh leathan (e.g. dhá) mar 'r' na Fraincise (viii), agus gur ar an dara siolla atá an bheim in 'cathain' agus 'piano' (x).

Réimse an fhoclóra an ghné is suimiúla ag léitheoirí, agus gan amhras, na focail is coitianta a bheadh ó thosaitheoirí i gceist sa chás seo. Lena chois sin, bítear ag súil le méid áirithe focal nua, le freastal cuí ar réimsí áirithe cultúrtha, agus ar na saolta seo ní mór d'fhoclóir a bheith ceart go polaitiúil. Ina dhiaidh sin, is minic logainmneacha agus sainréimsí eile i gceist. Ar an iomlán, tá roghnú maith cuimsitheach, oiriúnach,

déanta, agus sin sa chúngach, mar ní bhíonn líne le cur amú sna mionfhoclóirí. Tá timpeallacht an fhoghlaimeora cuimsithe go maith ann - cúrsaí oideachais, caithimh aimsire, saol na tuaithe, saol na cathrach, etc. Tá ainmhithe, éisc, éin, plandaí, bláthanna, etc., ann. Ach is mó atá plandaí, bia, glasraí agus torthaí, cuid acu ón gcoigríoch, i gceist ná luibheanna agus bláthanna fiáine na tíre. Mar shampla, tá 'apricot', 'artichoke', 'asparagus', 'aubergine' agus 'avocado' ann, agus 'clementine', 'nectarine' agus 'courgette' fosta, ach nach bhfuil na trí cinn dheireanacha sa G/B. Tá 'primrose', 'dandelion' agus 'nettle' ann, ach níl 'dock'; agus má tá 'violet' sa B/G (lena idirdhealú ón dath corcairghorm - nach bhfuil sa G/B) níl sailchuach sa G/B. Tá 'viola' ann, ach is gléas ceoil é. Tá cornflour/gránphlúr ann, ach faraor tá an Ghaeilge chéanna ar 'cornflower' (*recte* gormán/cab an ghasáin, nach bhfuil sa G/B, ná súil leis). Ní bhraithim go mbeadh 'camomile' ann murach an 'camomile tea'. Ó thaobh na gcrann, níl seiceamar sa G/B, ná 'elm' sa B/G, agus is 'beech' é fáibhile sa B/G ach is 'tree' é sa G/B (mar a bhfuil feá/beech). Agus is é an feall go bhfuil 'spinach' ar spionán, díreach faoi spionáiste/spinach(G/B).

Cúrsaí cultúir agus creidimh de, tá 'mass', 'rosary', agus cuid mhaith téarmaí creidimh eile ann (níl 'extreme unction' ná 'benediction' ann, bíodh go bhfuil 'Stations of the Cross' sa B/G). Tá cléir go leor ann, an 'rabbi' na measc, ach níl 'abbot', 'abbess' ná prior sa B/G bíodh go bhfuil 'priory', 'monastery' agus 'convent'. Na Proinsiasaigh (G/B) an t-aon ord a luaitear - agus a chúramaí atá foclóirithe na Roinne Oideachais agus na hoird teagaisc go léir a lua! Tá 'God', 'Jesus' agus 'Holy Ghost/Spirit' ann ach níl 'Mary', bíodh go bhfuil Muire agus an Mhaighdean Mhuire sa G/B (agus an leagan neamhghnách Muire Mhaighdean/Virgin Mary faoi Muire fosta.) Tá an 'Hail Mary' ann (B/G) ach níl 'Angelus', agus ní bhfaighfí *Our Father* gan féachaint faoi paidir (G/B). Tá an 'Creed' ann, ach gan aon 'Confiteor'. I measc na bhféilte tá 'Wren's Day' ('St. Stephen's Day' sa G/B) agus 'Thanksgiving Day' (B/G) agus 'April Fool's Day'.

Tá 'hurling' agus 'Gaelic football' ann, ach níl 'handball', agus is gá camógaíocht a lorg sa G/B. Níl currach sa B/G, ná ceilidh. Tá 'netball' ann. Tá an 'House of Lords' ann (B/G) ach gan aon 'House of Commons', agus tá 'Commonwealth' agus 'Prince of Wales' agus 'queen mother' sa dá thaobh. (Is fearr *rionmháthair* anseo ná máthair na banríona ag Collins, mar is cuma cé acu máthair banríona nó máthair rí í. Dála an scéil, sa Fhrainc a thosaigh sé, mar theideal!).

Tá laethanta na seachtaine ann gan cháim. Tá na mionna ann, agus na pláinéid, agus comharthaí an stoidiaca (níl stoidiaca sa G/B) ach gan aon réaltbhuíon díomaite den 'Plough'. Tá contaetha agus cúigí na hÉireann ann, agus cathracha, farraigí, etc (Cuir Dobhar (G/B) ionadh beag orm nó gur chuimhnigh mé go bhfuil sé ag Ó Rathaille in *Cabhair Ní Ghoirfead*). Tá príomh-logainmneacha an domhain ann, idir thíortha seanbhunaithe agus stáit nua na hEorpa, roinnt poblachtaí de chuid an Aontais Shóivéadaigh mar a bhí, etc. Tá Kazakhstan ann, agus gan a thuilleadh de na -stáineacha nach mbeadh gnó mór díobh. Ní miste liomsa gan Moldavia ann - tá Moldovia - ach chronaigh mé Slovenia. (Níl Kosovo ann ach oiread, ach ní stopfaidh sin mé ó bheith ag cáineadh Cosobhó mar leagan. An Chosaiv an leagan is údarásaí, ach ní bheadh locht agam ar Cosavó.) Tá Nigeria ann, ach níl Níger. Níl aibhneacha ná sléibhte ann amach ó chorrcheann mar na hAlpa agus an tSionainn. Ní ceart an t-alt a chur le Muir Bhailt ná Muir Chairib, dála an scéil, ach b'ionadh liom gan an t-alt ag gabháil le Róimh anseo. Ba chóir é a chur le Boisnia fosta. Is coitianta Poblacht na Seice agus Poblacht na Slóvaice ná an Phoblacht Sheiceach, etc. Agus Tuaisceart Éireann gan an t-alt atá ar an stát ó thuaidh.

Tá na haidiachtaí agus na teangacha 'French', 'Spanish', etc. ann, bíodh nach mbactar leo i ngach cás - níl 'Lithuanian', 'Estonian' ná 'Latvian' ann, ná teangacha nó ciníocha nach mbeadh i gceist mórán anseo. Tugtar 'Dutchwoman' (Ollannach mná), 'Frenchwoman', 'Irishwoman', 'Scotswoman',

etc., de bhreis ar 'Dutchman', etc. (Ar ndóigh, is féidir 'is Ollannach í' a rá i gcónaí). I gcás 'Swede', 'Dane', 'American', etc., caithfear teacht leis an bhfoirm ghinearálta Sualannach, Danmhargach, etc. Níl Lochlannach ar 'Dane' (sa chiall stairiúil) agus níl 'Roman' sa B/G ach mar chuid de 'Roman Catholic'.

Níl 'priestess' ná 'poetess' ná 'authoress' ná 'negress' (ná fiú 'negro') ná 'usherette' (ná fiú 'usher') ann sa B/G ach tá 'goddess', 'stewardess', 'waitress', agus 'conductress'. Sa G/B tá bandochtúir agus an miniú cúramach 'doctor (female)' agus banfhile 'poet (female)' agus banspásaire 'astronaut (female)'. Tá 'spacewoman' ann fosta (agus an Ghaeilge chéanna sin air) agus 'policewoman' (bangharda, banphóilín). Ní heol don fhoclóir seo altra ar nurse, agus tá banaltra fir/male nurse sa G/B, agus dheamhan locht air. Tá 'stag party' ann, ach níl 'hen party'.

Agus seo an áit lena dhearbhú go bhfuil 'vagina', 'penis' (bod agus péineas araon) agus 'orgasm' sa dá thaobh (agus an focal céanna air is atá ar climax sa B/G), nach bhfuil 'clitoris' sa B/G ach go bhfuil brillín air sa G/B, agus nach bhfuil 'vulva' i gceachtar taobh. Maidir le stripper/struipéar (B/G) déanaim amach go bhfreagraíonn sé do nochtóir/stripper (G/B) seachas do struipear Uí Dhónaill, ar bó (forgach, gamhnach, etc.) é agus 'flighty girl' nó 'loose woman' ina dhiaidh sin. Murar 'paint-stripper' é. Tá 'arse' ann, agus póg mo thóin fiú sa G/B (ach faraor, tá botún cló ann).

Fáilteofar roimh teach an asail agus dul ar an ordóg, agus roimh chuid mhór téarmaí agus fhocail nua nó nua-aimseartha seachas mar a luadh cheana, leithéidí 'aromatherapy', 'breathalyser', 'bulimia' (*recte* búilime seachas boilimia), 'byte', 'car bomb', 'cagoule' (ní raibh a fhios agamsa ach oiread!), 'come out' (of homosexual), 'comeuppance', 'cyberspace' (*recte* cibearspás seachas cibirspás), 'laser printer', 'negative equity', 'ozone-friendly', 'random access', 'unfavourable economic climate', 'virtual reality', etc.

Amach ón nuathéarmaíocht, a bheadh coimhthíoch ag daoine, b'fhéidir, tá go leor eiseamláirí de Ghaeilge amhrastúil scaipthe tríd an bhfoclóir. Shíl mé iad a aicmiú mar ab (amhras beag orm), cc (cáithnínt ar mo chraiceann) agus ccncco (cad chuige nár cuireadh ceist ormsa), ach sa deireadh níor bhac mé. Ní déarfaí - go bhfios domsa - go mbeadh cnámh ag deisiú ná gur bhain duine an t-anam díom, go bhfuil nimh san fheoil eatarthu, ná fual ort, ná cumas aige, ná duine ag smaoineamh fút, ná Inion Gráinne Nic Dhiarmada (Ms GnicDh). Ní aontóinn le cos a choinneáil le rud (to keep abreast of something), airneán a dhéanamh (to keep vigil), dul as do chrann cumhachta (to run amok), do chothú a thuilleamh (to earn one's keep) ná bainne a bheith ag imeacht faoi bheiriú (boiling over). Ní déarfaí de ghnáth deas agus te (nice and warm), thuairteáil a gloine don talamh (her glass crashed to the floor), ná chuaigh an doras i bhfostú (the door jammed). Leaganacha amhrastúla eile: ag lorg praghas áirithe don teach, ioctar coimisiún dó, bhí a dhroim casta liom, bhraith sé maslaithe lena ndúirt sí, bhris an carr anuas. Ní maith liom le teann bruídiúlachta (by brute force), seachain do ghnó féin (mind your own business), Áine a thugtar uirthi (she's called Áine), d'fhéadfadh sé cuimhneamh ar an tsráid sin fós, ná rug sí ar ocht [n-]iasc. Ar éigean a déarfaí go mbeadh scealpóg sa ghloine ná gur mhair sé i dteach beag ainnis. Ní dhéanfá tú féin a shuiteáil (install), agus níor chuala mé riamh cúpla cróca (a few jars). Cé a déarfadh is féidir leatsa labhairt ar 'YOU can talk!' Agus faoi Dhia, cé a thug spruitíní soighe ar 'beansprouts' (B/G)?

Tá aistriúcháin eile agus sílim go mbeidís deacair nó neamhchoitianta ag foghlaimeoirí: driuch/creepy feeling (B/G), go breas nó go treas/by hook or by crook (G/B), fuath/phanthom (B/G), bualsach/slut (G/B, sraoilleog atá in B/G agus níl sin in G/B), le stáir/(waiting, etc.) for ages, preabsháibh/jigsaw (tool), comhbhruith/concoction, forcheilt/cover-up (B/G), tothlaigh/crave (B/G), díobhach vearnais ingne/nail varnish remover, intrachta/negotiable, ceileatram sibhialtachta/veneer of civilisation (B/G), etc.

Níl oiread seanfhocal ná cora cainte anseo agus a shamhlaítear leis an nGaeilge go minic. An méid acu atá ann, bíonn comhartha leo de ghnáth, agus tugtar bri liteartha na bhfocal (más gá) chomh maith leis an aistriúchán. Arís, tá cuid den tiontú ón Bhéarla leamh go leor, e.g. díol as rud anuas ar an tairne (to pay for something on the nail), coinnigh faoi do hata é (keep it under your hat), agus cineál a láimhe féin a thabhairt do dhuine (to pay somebody back in kind) ach b'fhéidir gur dearmad riomhaireachta an ceann sin.

Feiniméan eile a bhaineann le foclóiri, focail éagsúla a bheith ar rud faoi cheannfhocail éagsúla. Ní miste sin má bhíonn na heiseamláirí uilig ceart, nó is bealach é leis an stór focal a mhéadú. Mar shampla, tá dealgán/biorán cniotála araon ar 'knitting needle' agus iad araon sa G/B, ach dealgán agus dealgán cniotála atá faoi 'needle' agus biorán cniotála faoi 'knitting needle'. Mar an gcéanna, tá an mol thuaidh agus an pol thuaidh araon sa G/B, ach gheobhaidh tú an chéad cheann faoi 'pole' agus an ceann eile faoi 'North Pole'; bean ghlúine atá ar 'midwife' sa G/B, ach bean chabhrach sa B/G; bástcóta agus vástchóta atá ar 'waistcoat' sa G/B, bástcóta agus veist sa B/G ('vest' atá ar veist sa G/B).

Tá corrleagan canúnach nó neamhchaighdeánach thall is abhus: fógraithe, carnaigh, cosnaigh, ceath, tógaint, don bhfoireann, san bhFrainc, cúntar, úrlár, instear, greim le n-ithe, tosnaigh, traen, seinnt, etc., ach díomaite de seilmide agus dánaíocht níor bhuail aon cheannfhocal mar sin liom.

Tá an leagan amach ar fheabhas. Tá aird dírithe ar fhocail a mbíonn deacrachtaí leo (réamhfhocail go mór mór), agus tá fo-iontrálacha ann i gcás briathra a mbíonn réamhfhocail nó dobhiathartha ag gabháil leo, mar luigh faoi, luigh isteach, agus 'do', 'do away with', 'do up', etc. Is iondúil gur iontrálacha ar leith iad leithéidí 'parking', 'parking meter' agus 'parking fine' sa B/G. Taobh istigh de na hiontrálacha, nuair a bhítear ag athrú ó roinn chainte go chéile - ó ainmfhocal go briathar, abair - bíonn 'piléar' nó spota beag dubh mar fholáireamh don léitheoir. Sa G/B tá crostagairtí ó chlaonfhoirm go ceannfhocal, agus sainchomhartha ar sheanfhocail agus ar chaint shamhlaíoch. Léirítear bríonna éagsúla san iontráil chéanna le sainmhníú idir lúibíní más gá, e.g. réimse...2 stretch (of land); 3 field (in database) nó scene 1 (place) láthair... 2 (in play) radharc...

Tá rannóg i lár an fhoclóra ar chúrsaí gramadaí. Pléitear na hathruithe tosaigh anseo, agus den chéad uair riamh dá bhfaca mise, cuirtear na hathruithe sin san áireamh in ord na bhfocal i gcorp an fhoclóra. Mar shampla, nd- remove 'n', ts- remove 't', bh- remove 'h', agus go fiú tA- remove 't'. An-áis go deo é sin ag tosaitheoirí. Ach níl bp- ná dt- ná bhf- ann, ná tE, ná 'h' mar réamhlitir ach oiread.

Tá clár na bhforainmneacha réamhfhoclacha ann (agus 'eatarthu' mar 1ú iol. 'idir', faraor). Agus tá clár na ndíochlaontaí ann, ar ndóigh. Is ionadh liom agus spás chomh gann nár roghnaíodh na samplaí níos cúramaí sa chuid seo. Mar is ionann ó thaobh díochlaonadh de (1ú) fathach agus manach, agus ceann agus fear; (2ú) póg agus bróg, áit agus páirc, abairt agus cáipéis (agus gan sampla dar críoch - (e)ach ann); (3ú) cainteoir agus múinteoir (agus gan -eir ná -úir ann), rás agus rang, beannacht agus iarracht; (4ú) cailín agus toitín, balla agus garda, brú agus cnó, bró agus trá (agus gan leithéid ainmhí ann, abair). Agus ainneoin a ndeirtear anseo, tá go leor foirmeacha neamhrialta nach dtugtar san fhoclóir, e.g. iolrai mar noda, cearta, etc. Agus níl difear idir na haidiachtaí gaisciúil agus tuirsiúil ó thaobh díochlaonadh de. (D'fhéadfaí bheith níos tiosaí sna hiontrálacha fosta. Mar shampla, faoin bhriathar 'climb', tá dreap, ach is beag an bhreis air 'to climb a mountain', 'he climbed up to the top of the hill', agus 'she climbed down the ladder', nuair is dreap an briathar i ngach cás. Ní geal liom dreap sa sampla deireanach, cé bith).

Ceap, pacáil, cuardaigh, agus imigh na briathra rialta samplacha, agus ní holc an rogha iad más taobh le ceithre bhriathar a bheifí. Trí thimpiste éigin tá an 3ú uatha bain. sa cholún contráilte i gcás ceap. Níl an rannóg trí chéile gan a cion de mhíondearmaid eile, agus tá go

leor míchruinnis tríd an bhfoclóir (B/G) ó thaobh sonraí insce agus uimhreacha díochlaontaí de. Tá treoracha eile gramadaí an-mhaith ar an iomlán. (Ach faoi a[6] is é an 'dependent' form a leanann é seachas an 'independent').

Tá fiúntas agus maitheasaí móra ag roinnt leis an saothar seo, ach faraor is iad na lochtanna is mó a tharraingíonn caint i gcás focléora, mar a d'aithin Samuel Johnson féin. B'fhéidir dá mbeadh tuilleadh cabhrach ar fáil don eagarthóir nach mbeadh na míondearmaid chomh líonmhar is atá.

This is the newest addition to a growing number of mini and pocket two-way bilingual dictionaries aimed at English-speaking learners of Irish (beginner to intermediate level), and the second from a major British lexicographical house.

The work scores well on lay-out, has a useful grammar section and an informal but generally adequate pronunciation guide. Alphabetisation in the Irish/English section innovatively takes cognisance of initial mutation.

There are some 100,000 words and phrases in all. Vocabulary in both sections succeeds in representing a wide variety of interests - no mean achievement given the discrepancies between a world language and one with far fewer resources. Language is inclusive and politically correct, taunts of puritanism have been forestalled, and a number of Irish words introduced for the first time to the non-specialist reader. Perhaps inevitably, the Irish in the Irish/English section is the more authentic and aesthetically pleasing, and that in the English/Irish section somewhat utilitarian by comparison. There are quite a few infelicitous equivalences, inconsistencies, etc., and frequent misspellings (mainly of Irish) detract from the many merits of the publication. One may ask whether it was wise or fair to lay responsibility for such a multifarious task, as appears to be the case, on one sole editor.

Máire Nic Mhaoláin
105 Taobh na Coille
Deilginis
Contae Átha Cliath

Maidir le do litir ...
2 heagrán. Baile Átha Cliath, An Gúm, 1998. 96 lch. £3.95.

Ba é Séamas Daltún nach maireann a scríobh an chéad eagrán den leabhrán seo i 1970, agus is dó a tíolacadh an dara heagrán. Is é cuspóir an leabhráin treoir a thabhairt don té a chaitheas litir fhoirmiúil a scríobh nó tabhairt faoi chomhfhreagras oifigiúil. Státseirbhísí, cainteoirí Gaeilge agus foghlaimeoirí a bhainfeas leas as an saothar seo.

Athrú chun feabhais is ea 'Logainmneacha Iasachtacha agus Eagraíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta' a chur in Aguisín 1, áit a raibh na 'Naisiúin Aontaithe agus Eagraíochtaí Idirnáisiúnta eile' sa chéad eagrán. Cé is moite de sin, is beag athrú a rinneadh ar an téacs, seachas ceannteidil a chur isteach anseo is ansiúd, mar aon le roinnt cartún agus clúdach tarraingteach.

Is iomaí athrú tagtha ar an Ghaeilge agus ar an saol ina mhaireann sí ó 1970 i leith. Is trua mar sin nár féachadh le scrúdú a dhéanamh ar an teanga scríofa féachaint an bhfuil na frásaí a moltar mar bheannú agus mar chríoch litreach in úsáid , agus cé chomh maith is a fheileann siad don chultúr neamhfhoirmiúil ina mhaireann muid. Ar ghá 'Mise le dúthracht duit' a rá - nár leor 'Mise le hurraim' i gcás sagairt nó ministir, agus 'Mise le mór-urraim i gcás easpaig agus uaidh sin suas? Ní léir ach an oiread cén fáth nár leor 'Mise le meas mór/mórmheas/ardmheas/dea-mhéin (ag brath ar ndóigh ar an gcomhthéacs) i gcás airí rialtais, baill an Oireachtais agus daoine eile mór le rá.

Scéal eile nár tugadh suas chun dáta, a chuirfeas léitheoirí nach dtaobhaíonn leabharlanna go rómhinic amú is ea an treoir a thugtar faoin dóigh ar cheart caitheamh le sloinnte ban i gcatalóga agus in innéacsanna leabharlainne. Moltar cloí le moladh Mhuiris Uí Dhroighneáin na sloinnte ban a chláru 'san fhoirm fhírinscneach amháin'(Ó Droighneáin, 1967). Is é an toradh atá air seo nuair a lorgaítear sa chatalóg Ní, Uí, Nic 'Féach faoi Ó, Ó hÓ nó Mac'. Nuair a aimsítear an

leagan firinscneach, feictear an seod seo a leanas:
Ó hÓgáin, Máire, Máire Bn Uí Ogáin, Ó hÓgáin, Máire, Máire Ní Ógáin

Pléadh an córas conspóideach seo cheana in iris Chumann Leabharlann na hÉireann (An Leabharlann, 10(1)1967: 14-16). Is leor a rá gur ghlac leabharlann Choláiste Ollscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath leis an chóras amscaí seo, eiriodh as sna hochtóidi. Ní léir gur ghlac aon leabharlann eile leis, agus ní hiontas gur leá chúr na habhann a tháinig air. Is cinnte nár rith sé le Séamas Daltún go gceapfaí gur ag déanamh beag is fiú de scribhneoiri mná a bhíothas. Is mór an t-athrú a thainig ar stadas agus ar iomháigh na mban ó shin i leith, agus is cinnte nach mbeadh aon ghlacadh lena leithéid de chóras an lá atá inniu ann.

Mar fhocal scoir, is é atá de dhíth, ní athchló, ach eagrán úr den leabhar seo a bheas ag teacht le riachtanais na mílaoise.

Tagairtí
Ó Droighneáin, M. (1967). *An sloinnteoir Gaeilge agus an t-ainmneoir*. Baile Átha Cliath, Cumann Lúthchleas Gael. v.

Ulster-Scots - A Grammar of the Traditional Written and Spoken Language *Philip Robinson. [Belfast]. The Ullans Press, 1997. x, 229 pp. ISBN 0 953035 01 8 £11.80.*

While a great deal of valuable work and description of Ulster-Scots phonology and vocabulary has been in existence for some time, this is the first major effort to deal with the wider range of complexities and variation associated with syntax, and with the arrival of this book a significant gap in our knowledge of Ulster-Scots has been filled. The creation of a genuine data base is an absolute prerequisite and necessity for all users of Ulster-Scots and for those interested in its promotion, preservation and linguistic and social development for future generations. As the book is the first meticulous attempt at detailed analysis and description of grammatical components, accompanied by copious illustrative materials from spoken and written sources, it is bound to become a standard reference book for everyone seeking information and interested in any serious study of the language.

It is best at this point to describe the general outline and organisation of the materials contained in the book. It contains some eleven chapters preceded by an introductory chapter and followed by an index and glossary of common vocabulary. Chapter 1 deals with spelling and pronunciation and with some of the most salient modifications within the conventional spelling of various vocalic and consonantal sounds, concluding with a special mention of the spelling conventions in James Fenton's *Hamely Tongue: a personal record of Ulster-Scots in County Antrim*, many of which we are told are likely to be adopted by future writers. The following nine chapters are introduced under traditional grammatical headings - Chapter 2 Nouns and Numbers, Chapter 3 The 'Articles' and Measures of Time, Chapter 4 Pronouns and People, Chapter 5 Adjectives, Adverbs and Asking Questions, Chapter 6 Prepositions and Conjunctions, Chapter 7 The verb in Ulster-Scots, Chapter 8 The Primary Auxiliary Verbs, Chapter 9 The Secondary or Modal Auxiliary Verbs and Chapter 10 Sentence Construction and Word-order (syntax).

Ulster-Scots speakers are all to some degree 'bilingual', users not only of Ulster-Scots but of different 'dialectal' forms of English, including standard English. The relationship between all such usages has been the focus of sociolinguistic analysis for decades in many areas of the English speaking world and Ulster-Scots has much to offer this intriguing field of study. One must also consider the possibility that many Ulster-Scots speakers were trilingual especially during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, just as they have been in many areas of the eastern half of Donegal down to the end of the nineteenth century and in some cases into the twentieth. Furthermore, it should not be forgotten that

many who arrived in Ulster from Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were also native speakers of different varieties of Scottish Gaelic and many also bilingual in Gaelic and English. Their contribution to the overall development of Ulster-Scots must also be assessed. This will be no easy task as Ulster Irish and Scottish Gaelic have much in common linguistically and it may prove difficult to isolate their respective contributions. The influence of the Ulster Irish substratum on the development of the phonology and syntax of Ulster English generally has been documented in various books and articles, and while there is much agreement there is also a certain amount of disagreement as both internal linguistic development and historical developments have clouded matters somewhat over a four hundred year contact period. In such language contact situations certain paths of development are inevitable and the evidence available proves that this is the case. This is all the more obvious in relation to the material described in the chapters dealing with prepositional usage, the article, verb tense and aspectual differences, verb and prepositional constructions and word order strategies.

As already mentioned, this book is almost entirely descriptive without any really thorough linguistic analysis of the data presented. Furthermore, the book ignores for the most part the sociolinguistic and language contact environment within which Ulster-Scots has been maintained and developed. There are no references to the large body of linguistic data available on sociolinguistics, language contact situations, the relationship between standard and non-standard forms of language, the influence of written norms and education on language development, diglossic usage etc., either world wide or in relation to the linguistic situation in Ireland as a whole. There is too much emphasis throughout the book on maintaining a 'germanic' connection with Ulster-Scots and in relating many of its non-English features to this historic relationship. Much more could and can be gained by looking at its near neighbours, in particular Irish and Scottish Gaelic, and the obvious influence that these languages have had on its evolution and development over the last four hundred years.

The overall rigorous description in the book under review of hundreds of examples of everyday usage from literary and spoken sources is indispensable as a reference tool for the future study of the language and the consequent development of relevant reference tools such as standard grammars, dictionaries, linguistic studies etc. The most obvious and imminent necessity is the setting up and collection of a solid data base of the colloquial language, comparable with similar data bases available for different varieties and periods of the English language. When such corpora are made available, it should limit the temptation of creating a guessing game where one tries to identify what Ulster-Scots form corresponds to a particular English expression or sentence, as exemplified in parts of the book under discussion. Secondly, I feel that there is a great need to develop and outline a standard written form for Ulster-Scots, if it is to be successfully studied and cultivated further as a means of linguistic expression in many 'higher' registers and sociolinguistic situations where it has hitherto been excluded.

Despite some of the reservations outlined above, Philip Robinson is to be congratulated for his pioneering work in placing a vast amount of interesting and distinctive Ulster-Scots linguistic material at our disposal. In reading through the book, I was reminded time and time again of many words and expressions with which I had been quite familiar once. I had learned them at first hand roon the time quhan A(h) wuz warkin amang the fairmin fowk o East Donegal. A'll say nae mair the noo!

Donall P. Ó Baoill
Queen's University of Belfast

***Nod don Eolach: Gasaitéar Eolaíochta*. Matt Hussey.** *Baile Átha Cliath, An Gúm, 1999. xv, 253 lch. ISBN 1-85791-103-2. £7.30.*

Leabhar tagartha is ea an saothar seo a chuireann eolas ar fáil don ghnáthléitheoir faoi eolaíocht agus teicneolaíocht na linne seo. Tá aithne ag léitheoirí na Gaeilge le fada ar an údar, an Dr Hussey, Stiúrthóir Dhámh na hEolaíochta sa DIT, ina cháiliocht mar eagarthóir *An tEolaí*, nuachtlitir do scoláirí iar-bhunscoile. Is cosúil baint a bheith idir a bhfuil sa leabhar seo agus an obair a rinne sé ar an nuachtlitir, a bhfuil sé ina eagarthóir uirthi le hocht mbliana. Cuimsíonn an gasaitéar gach réimse den eolaíocht chomhaimseartha: innealtóireacht, leigheas, fisic, réalteolas, an chruinne, riomhaireacht, cúrsaí comhshaoil agus éabhlóide, srl. In ord aibítre atá na ceannfhocail Ghaeilge leagtha amach. Gabhann aistriú Béarla le gach ceannfhocal, maille le cuntas mínithe agus crostagairtí nuair is gá.

Liostaíonn Clár na nIontrálacha na ceannfhocail Ghaeilge ar fad i bhfoirm foclóir Ghaeilge-Béarla agus tá liosta na dteideal Béarla leagtha amach mar an gcéanna i gcaoi go bhfuil gluaiseanna Gaeilge-Béarla agus Béarla-Gaeilge ar fáil don léitheoir. Baintear leas as cló trom i gcás téarmaí sa téacs nach ionann iad agus an ceannfhocal le cur in iúl don léitheoir go bhfuil ceannfhocal dá chuid féin ag an téarma nach míste a cheadú chomh maith. Tá neart pictiúr sa leabhar agus cur síos gonta ar chuid de na taighdeoirí ba mhó le rá: Max Plank, Louis Pasteur, Gregor Mendel, George Boole, chomh maith leo siúd atá fós gníomhach. Is díol spéise an dóigh a chaitear le hainmfhocal baininscneach san innéacs. In áit ˈf ˈan mhearbhaillˈ (mar a thugadh Muiris Ó Droighneáin air) a úsáid, cuirtear ˈh ˈisteach idir lúibíní cearnacha san áit chuí agus an t-alt chun deiridh, m.sh. *c[h]ill leictreach*, (an electrical cell). B ˈfhiú tuairim lucht foclóra a fháil ar an gcóras seo.

Is é seo an chéad saothar dá shórt a cuireadh ar fáil as Gaeilge. Saothar tráthúil é, anois go bhfuil aird an neamh-speisialtóra á díriú ar an eolaíocht, mar is léir ón bpoibliocht a thugtar di sna meáin chumarsáide. Is toradh fónta freisin é ar obair Choiste Téarmaíochta na Roinne Oideachais agus Eolaíochta, óir feictear an nuatéarmaíocht in úsáid ina comhthéacs féin seachas i liosta.

Is ceart a rá go bhfuil dearadh, cló agus crot an leabhair ar ard-chaighdeán. Tá an t-údar agus An Gúm le moladh as tabhairt faoina leithéid d ˈáis a chur ar fáil - thiocfadh gurbh é seo an chéad chéim i dtreo ciclipéid eolaíochta as Gaeilge.

NOTICES OF LECTURES, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES

2000	Sponsor	Theme & Contact	Venue
4-6 May	Spanish Association of Applied Linguistics	'Recent perspectives in language acquisition': Conference (http://www.ub.es/filoal/aesla/index.htm)	University of Barcelona
12-14 May	CLC (Celtic Linguistics Conference)	3rd Celtic Linguistics Conference (CLC3, Dept of Linguistics, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4. http://www.ucd.ie/-linguist/CLC3.html. Email: Cathal.Doherty@ucd.ie)	University College Dubli n
22-25 June	NAACLT (North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers)	6th annual conference of the North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers: 'The information age, Celtic languages and the new millennium' (NAACLT 2000, Dept of Computer Science & Information Systems, University of Limerick. Tel: +353-61-202783. Fax: +353-61-330876. Email: naaclt2000@ul.ie. URL: www.csis.ul.ie/naaclt2000)	University of Limerick
26-29 June	ALA	5th international conference ALA 2000 (Richard Aplin, University of Leicester, School of Education, 21 University Road, Leicester, LE17 RF, UK. Email: ala2000@btinternet.com)	University of Leicester
9-14 July	IPrA (International Pragmatics Association)	7th International Pragmatics Conference: 'Cognition in language use'. (IPrA Secretariat, PO Box 33 (Antwerp 11), B-2018 Antwerp, Belgium. Tel/Fax: +32-3-230-55 74. Email: ipra@uia.ua.ac.be)	Budapest Technical University Hungary
24-27 Août	AFLS (Association for French Language Studies)	'Le français – perspectives à l'aube du 21ème siècle': Colloque AFLS/Université Laval (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sml/AFLS)	Université Laval Québec Ville

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Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann
Linguistics Institute of Ireland
31, Plás Mhic Liam,
Baile Átha Cliath 2.

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